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NEW TESTAMENT HOURS

BY

CUNNINGHAM GEIKIE, D.D., LL.D.

AUTHOR OF "LIFE AND WORDS OF CHRIST," "HOURS WITH THE BIBLE," ETC., ETC.

WITH MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

VOL. I.

THE GOSPELS.

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PREFACE.

THIS volume is the first of a series in which I propose to treat the New Testament on the same plan as I treated the Old Testament, and which gained so wide an acceptance, under the name of "Hours with the Bible," of which a new edition, revised throughout, and largely rewritten, has just been issued.

It will be found, I think, that this volume on the Gospels supplies new and interesting side lights on the Sacred Life, helping us to realize it more vividly than would be possible without a background of local colouring such as I have sought to present. Knowing Palestine well, I have desired to surround the Gospel incidents with all that can illustrate and fill them out, in the characteristics of climate, landscape, and people, as well as of nature in all its manifestations.

In the subsequent volumes I purpose following the same mode with the Acts and Epistles, telling the story of the New Religion to the martyrdom of St. Paul. As I have visited most of the places hallowed by the presence of the great Apostle, I hope, if spared to finish my task, to be able to present the narrative of his life and work so as to interest at once the student and the general public.

CUNNINGHAM GEIKIE.

February, 1894.

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NEW TESTAMENT HOURS.

CHAPTER I.

CHRIST'S NATIVE TOWN.[1]

APPROACHING Bethlehem from Hebron, the track runs on the east side of a wide valley, which presents, near the famous little town, one of the loveliest sights in Palestine. The opposite rounded heights, one of which is crowned by a picturesque village, are dotted with olives, and the hollow and slopes between are fretted, in every direction, by stone walls, enclosing finely tilled gardens rich in fruit trees and market produce. Patient industry has created a paradise, which shows what Palestine at large might be made in diligent hands. The track turns to the right a short way south of "Rachel's tomb," which rises "by the wayside;" a low, domed, Mohammedan structure, within a square, stone-walled space, sacred to the memories of between three and four thousand years. The chalk-like road sweeps on between scarped white limestone on the right, and the broad valley Harubeh, which winds round the northern side of Bethlehem; its farther side broken into an amphitheatre of bare, rounded swells; its southern, rough with ancient terraces, one over the other, rising towards the houses; their great walls winding hither and

[1] Luke ii. 4.

thither along the slope, and bearing up strips of fertile ground, rich in olives, figs, vines, and even patches of barley. The valley between, as in the days of Boaz and Ruth, is dotted by the crops of the half-peasant townsmen, who reach their little unfenced patches, marked off with boundary stones, by the descending path down which, no doubt, Ruth went to glean long ages ago. The town is at least a mile from the Hebron and Jerusalem road, and lies high, on two ridges, joined by a narrow neck of hill: a long street of low, flat-roofed houses, winding along the face of the Harubeh valley, into which the backs of some of them sink to an extra story; a shorter middle street running behind in broken irregularity, while a third, even less continuous, looks down on the southern side into the valley Rahib, a sweet but stony hollow of gardens and fruit trees. In spring, when the green of the rising crops, the bright red of the field anemones, and the wakening fruit trees hide the roughness of the soil, the yellow-white line of the houses is very picturesque. There are no springs in the town, so that it has largely to depend on the rain-water caught in underground cisterns. A rich supply of spring water, however, is found in the valley on the south, an ancient stone conduit, about eighteen inches square, passing through it from the "pools of Solomon," to the great advantage of the town; the women bringing it up the hill, for the use of their households, in black goat-skin bottles or brown-ware jars.

Standing on one of the flat roofs, the rounded hills and the valleys south of Jerusalem, five miles off, are before you, but the Holy City itself is not visible. To the east the landscape sinks in yellowish-white hills, by great steps, so that a glimpse is visible of the Dead Sea, thirteen or

fourteen miles off, but four thousand feet beneath Bethlehem; the flat-topped, purple line of the hills of Moab, rising beyond it, broken by deep shadows, which mark the gorges and ravines running up to the famous pastures of the tableland. To the south-east rises the conical hill, now called Fureidis, where, a few years after Christ's birth, Herod the Great was buried, with huge pomp, in the fortress he had built to mark the spot whither he had fled in the early dangers of his career. Round it there stretches a lonely waste of barren upland, merging towards the south, on the edge of the horizon, into the hills of Tekoa, which bend westward in a chain of bare, low summits. To the west the view does not extend much beyond the road to Hebron; and thus, though Bethlehem lies a little higher than Jerusalem, it is comparatively shut in. The hills, moreover, are all bare; showing, indeed, to the east, a ghastly succession of naked rocks—the picture of desolation. Two miles off, in that direction, on the slopes beyond the Bethlehem valley, poor flocks of sheep and goats find a scanty nourishment, the wonder being how they manage to pick up anything at all from such stony barrenness. Yet it was here that the shepherds lay with their flocks—the poorest of the poor—when the angels appeared to them at the Nativity.

Everything, however, goes by comparison, and contrasted with the desolation so near it, Bethlehem, especially when approached from the Jordan valley, must have deserved its name, "the house of bread," as Naomi thought it; while its little fields, its vineyards, and olive gardens, encircling the town, justified Micah in calling it Ephratah,[1] "the fruitful place." It could never have been very

[1] Micah v. 2.

large, for Micah, more than two thousand years ago, speaks of it as "small," or even, in the rendering of Zunz, "the smallest" among the communities of Judah. Indeed, there are no signs of its ever having been more than a thread of humble, flat-roofed houses, winding along the hill ridge; but it has an immortal interest as the home of the race of David, and the birthplace of our Saviour. It was here, also, that Boaz, Naomi, and Ruth played their parts in old Hebrew life; and here Jesse lived with his eight sons, and through its arched gateway, David, "the darling," must often have led out his father's sheep and goats to the stony pastures. Here the three famous sons of Zeruiah, David's sister—Joab, Abishai, and Asahel—passed their youth, and here Asahel, at least, was buried. A short distance to the north-west, outside the gate, on a flat sheet of cream-coloured limestone, are three deep cisterns, from one of which, we are told, the three heroes brought David water at the peril of their lives.

The sacred spot where Jesus was born is pointed out as in a cave under the high altar of the great Church of the Nativity. Nor is there anything improbable in a cave being thus honoured, for it is quite common in Palestine to build a house against the mouth of such a natural chamber, to have the benefit of it either as a stable or a lumber-room. You go down by a flight of steps to the supposed "stable," now made into a kind of room by hangings, once splendid, on the walls and roof. Two huge gilt candlesticks rise in the corner; a wall-altar, over which is a smoke-blackened picture, takes up some space, and below, rising from the ground at the same side, is a small scallop-shaped recess, fringed with lamps always burning, and paved with various coloured marble, forming

a star with a silver centre, while along the outer edge there run the words in Latin, "Here Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary." I frankly confess that the spot had a mighty power over me, for it has really very high claims to be regarded as genuine, tradition having marked it as such since the second century.

The people of Bethlehem are largely engaged in carving mementoes of the town for sale to visitors, and are a very industrious community. The women work with the men, for they are Christians; not a few of them being, moreover, very good-looking, probably from the fact that ever since the Crusades there has been more or less Western blood in the various religious communities.

Unmarried women wear on their heads a long white cotton or linen veil, supported on a frame, the ends hanging over the shoulders, down the arms; while just under the veil, which shows some of the hair, ornaments of

SILVER SHEKEL OF SIMON MACCABÆUS, WITH THE POT OF MANNA AND AARON'S ROD.
The legend on it reads, "Silver Shekel," "Jerusalem the Holy."

silver, or of silver-gilt, stretch across the forehead, the face being left uncovered. Heavy plaits of black hair hang down the back over a long blue or striped gown, tied loosely at the waist, and with open sleeves which reach the knees, its bosom being set off with patches of bright colour. Some, however, have besides, a bright

red, short-sleeved jacket, reaching to the waist or even to the knees. Married women wear a veil over a round felt hat without a rim, a mere cylinder in truth, and ornament it in front with an edging of coins. Earrings

Shekel of Eleazar, Son of Simon Maccabæus.

glitter under their black hair, and strings of coins, if they can afford it, hang on their bosom or round their neck. The veil is a very matter-of-fact article, about two yards long and a yard or so broad, of material so stout that it can be used, when desirable, for very practical purposes, as it was by Ruth, when Boaz put six measures of barley in it, and then lifted it on her back or head, though, one would think, he might have sent one of his men to carry it for her.

A walk down the main street of Bethlehem must bring before us as close a reproduction of an old Hebrew village of Christ's days as one can hope to see, though perhaps it is less sordid, from the influence of Western ideas. Joppa, perhaps, is more like an actual Bible town, for the streets of ancient Jerusalem, apart from the narrow foot-paths at the sides, seem to have been very uninviting. There is no thought of sanitation in the Western sense. Rivulets and puddles of abomination abound, and the long-nosed, yellow, masterless dogs cannot eat all the

garbage. The workshops are only arches with no window; the busy workers, sitting cross-legged on the floor, carving rosaries, perhaps from the stones of the dôm palm, or of the date or olive-wood, or crosses of various materials, or ornaments of bitumen from the Dead Sea, or cutting Scripture scenes on oyster shells from the Red Sea. Nothing could be ruder than the place in which they work, for it is often a rough cave, with a layer of reed stalks overhead to keep out the damp; the natural limestone left uncovered as a floor, and the doorway an illustration of carpentry primitive enough for the pre-historic period. Shops there may be said to be none, but men sit on the ground along the sides of the streets with piles of vegetables for sale; or dusty groceries spread out on a few boxes or rough shelves; or a small stock of raisins, oranges, or figs; or cakes and thin sticks of bread; or a tempting assortment of mouse-traps and other equally important attractions. It was much the same, no doubt, when Joseph and Mary came to Bethlehem, nineteen hundred years ago, finding shelter, one may fancy, where the Church of the Nativity now stands, with its bare open space in front, and children play and old men rest, on fallen ancient pillars that lie here and there. The line of the two or three streets, the character of the houses, and the manners of the people are still, no doubt, virtually the same as when Christ lay a babe in the Bethlehem manger, and Joseph and Mary, all these dim ages ago, looked out on the same landscape, varied by the same features as it offers to-day.

CHAPTER II.

THE EARLY HOME OF OUR LORD.[1]

In a sweet hollow of the belt of rounded gray hills, five or six miles wide, which separates the great plain of Esdraelon, in the south, from the small, feverish plain of El-Batthauf on the north, lies the scene of Christ's early years, and of His manhood, till at about the age of thirty He came out into the great world. The little valley passes on the south-east into a narrow gully, running down to Esdraelon, which it enters through steep sides about 300 feet high. The slope of the hill over the little Nazareth valley, on its north-west side, is the site of the sacred village, the white, flat-roofed houses of one or two stories rising in broken terraces nearly to the hill top, and looking over each other into the quiet dell beneath. Nazareth is still a small place, but in Christ's day it was so insignificant that it is never mentioned in the Old Testament, or even by Josephus, who speaks of so many villages in Lower Galilee, the temporary scene of his military activity. The yellowish white limestone is soft enough to cut easily, but hardens by exposure. Hills of it swell up on all sides in rounded waves, cold and desolate looking when not lighted up by the sun, for they are bare of all vegetation, whether grass, shrubs, or fruit trees.

In some places, indeed, they break into crumbling cliffs;

[1] Luke ii. 39, 40.

but though this softens the monotony, it does not add to the cheerfulness. Among the houses, however, are some olive trees and palms and some gardens; but a garden in the East would not deserve the name of being one in England. A fine girls' educational home stands up from amidst poorer structures, on the upper part of the hill, and with the slender minaret of a mosque, and the three churches of the Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Greeks, and some convents and other religious buildings, gives a modern air to the village. Yet there is much that must be very nearly what it was when He played, as a child, in these narrow, rough, steep, lane-like streets, or helped Joseph in his carpenter's workshop, very probably a small, stone-arched recess, like the rude work-places of the village artificers of to-day. Many houses are cut into the hill on the upper side of the streets, as we see at Genoa or in the Isle of Wight. There are the usual trades; the barber, the fruit-seller, the grocer, the cobbler, the blacksmith, and the carpenter, among others; but everything is on a scale more simple than the western world can imagine. Carpenters sit on the ground, to plane or cut with the adze, or drill, using tools quite the same, one may fancy, as their forefathers had, two thousand years ago, and contenting themselves with as primitive workmanship. Blacksmiths, who are perhaps in most demand, drive a modest trade in sharpening the mattocks and light coulters of the peasants, or making rude bill hooks, or still ruder clasp knives, sold, complete, at à piastre, or twopence halfpenny! To see their tiny bellows, and as tiny anvil and furnace, one might wonder how they could do anything with them at all; but their ancestors used what they use to-day, and why should they reflect on the wisdom of the

ancients by any change? They prefer to wear, as well nigh their only clothing, a long loose blouse and the turban of past millenniums, and move about with bare brown legs and bare feet, or in slippers without heels, and of incalculable antiquity; for an Oriental cobbler will patiently mend a slipper which an English beggar would throw away. Their houses are evidently copies of those of remote ages, with their bare walls and clay bench along one side; their earthen floor; their indifference to windows—the light, as a rule, coming only through the open doorway; and their want of furniture. The floor serves for chairs and table, and a mat on it contents them as a bed, where they sleep in their day-clothes, caring only that their heads be covered up. The hot season needs coolness rather than warmth; but when the nights are cold, they have their winter coat—a sheepskin, perhaps, cut by the rudest tailoring into a sleeved wrap, or a coat of thick camel-hair cloth, rough in the material, and most aboriginal in the shape. It is capable, in fact, of fitting any one, its sleeves and body being alike on the most liberal scale, so that it serves admirably for a cover by night, as it is large enough to make the figure, literally, almost as broad as it is long, when worn loose by day. The half-naked, brown children play in the rough, climbing, narrow, lane-like streets, the middle of which serves as a gutter in rainy weather; the men sit on their heels on the ground gossiping, in the open air, when not at work; the women are little seen. The flat roofs, reached by a coarsely made stair at the side, have their clay dovecots, and serve, at some seasons, as cool sleeping places, shelters of boughs being set up to keep off the night mists and the moonshine. So it was, we may believe, two thou-

sand years ago, for in the East ages go past with no change.

The water supply of the village depends mainly on rain, caught in multitudes of underground cisterns, hewn in the soft rock, no one knows how long ago. There is, however, one spring, bursting up out of the ground inside the Greek Church of the Annunciation, which represents an older church standing there as early as A.D. 700. From this, it runs down hill through a conduit, to an arched stone fountain, from the back wall of which it pours out, through metal spouts, into a trough, used by the villagers for their drinking supply. The arch forms a kind of porch, and under the shelter of this, in a shallow pool, made by the overflow, the women stand, at all hours, with tucked-up dresses, washing their linen. It is a pretty sight to see them coming from the village with large jars on their heads or shoulders, their figures beautifully straight: the Christian women unveiled, and with a gay handkerchief over their heads; the Mohammedan women veiled, but all alike, as a rule, with nothing over their under linen but a long blue slip, reaching to their ankles, and shewing their whole outline with a picturesqueness startling to Western notions, though, in fact, perfectly modest. Some, however, wear baggy trousers of bright colours, others have skirts over leggings, with smart jackets of various patterns; the different portions of the dress displaying, in full glory, the feminine love of colours. At Bethlehem, the women have a string of coins along their foreheads; in Nazareth, they hang them down their cheeks, all their wealth being kept, in this way, for ornament; so that to lose a single piece is a grievous matter, instantly noticed, and only overcome when, after a long search, with kindled lamp, in

their windowless little houses, it is at last happily found. The parable of Christ, in fact, repeats itself to-day.

The open ground beside the fountain is the evening gathering-place for the small flocks of the villagers, a tank providing the means of watering them. I have often watched the scene as the day closed. Two or three lean cows or oxen, a few sheep or goats, led by a "shepherd," evidently miserably poor, would slowly approach from the different heights; old men gathered, to rest on the tank or squat on the ground, gossiping; a water-carrier would pass, stick in hand, to fill the sheep- or goat-skin, made into a huge "bottle," slung at his back; the village women, not a few of them mothers, with a child at their side, would pass, talking volubly, to fill their big jars with "living," that is, spring water, which is much better than that of their cisterns. The yellow hills looked down bare and lonely—one of them marked by a small, white-domed Mohammedan "saint's" tomb, the surviving counterpart of a "high place" of Bible times, and still sacred to the ignorant peasants; some rough stone walls, and some hedges of huge cactus shutting in a few olive yards and so-called gardens; the open-air threshing floor of the village lying round in the hollow a little to the west; a few clumps of olives or fig trees dotting the slopes here and there, and attracting the eye on the appearance among them of a villager coming home in his turban and long blouse, bearing, perhaps, a plough on his shoulder, or resting it on the shoulder of his ass, if he were rich enough to own one, as he rode on at the pace of the creature's slow walk. If it were harvest, the tall, ungainly figure of a camel carrying huge bundles of wheat or barley to the threshing floor, or of some asses, loaded wondrously in proportion to their

size, would, now and then, also come out from between the hills into the valley, as the setting sun lighted up the air above the silent heights with ever-changing colour. The scene must have been much the same when Jesus used to rest by the fountain, or sit musing on the hills.

Embosomed among soft gray swells, Nazareth was shut out from the world, and offered a sweet seclusion, than which nothing could have been better fitted for the early years of our Lord. There was nothing to distract or disturb in the idyllic isolation of the little valley. The young child could not see beyond the heights around it, but when the years brought growing vigour and curiosity, He would only need to wander to the top of the village hill to have a wondrous panorama before Him. The great plain of Esdraelon lay at His feet, to the south; then, no doubt, rich in varied growths, to the far-away foot of the Samaritan hills and the range of Carmel. To the west His eye would sweep, over the sinking fringe of the hills of Lower Galilee, to the "Great Sea," where the promontory of Carmel plunges down into the Mediterranean waters. In the east He had before Him the great wooded cone of Mount Tabor, then crowned by a stronghold, but covered on its sides, we may be assured, as it is to-day, with rich growths of varied green. The caravan track from Damascus to the coast had run for ages, as it still does, along Esdraelon, two hours from Nazareth; and over it, when old enough to stray as far as the heights looking down on the plain, He would see long strings of camels, each tied to one before, and all following the humble ass of the turbaned driver, leisurely pacing east or west, to or from distant Syria, laden with the wheat or oil or other produce of western Asia, or bearing back the varied commodities of

Phœnicia, the great trading mart of those ages. He would see, too, from time to time, detachments of the local troops of Herod Antipas of Tiberias, on their way hither or thither, or a cohort from Roman "Samaria," which lay on the other side of Esdraelon. Then when, in His boyish wanderings over the low gray hills and through the little glens, in more than one of which there are still small groves of palms, He came to the last of the Galilean hills looking west, He would see below Him, on the sea edge, the famous cities of Phœnicia, with their smoking glass-works and huge dye-works, and the long, high piles of wharf warehouses in which were stored the treasures brought by the Tyrian ships from far-off lands. But the landscape, though the same in its natural features then as to-day, must have been very different in its human aspects. At present, Galilee, like all Palestine, has a very small population, but then, the now silent slopes and valleys were everywhere astir with a busy life, which left no spot uncultivated, and dotted the hillsides and summits with towns and villages. Yet, even then, the roads would hardly deserve the name, and wheeled vehicles would be unknown, mere bridle paths leading from place to place, except where a narrow Roman road stretched across the landscape, linking the military stations. There are no signs of any highway ever having led up from the great plain to the tableland of Nazareth, and even now one has to let his native horse climb the steep cliff as it best can. Indeed, the ascent is only possible to a creature bred in the country, twisting and winding between rocks, or forcing its way up slopes distressingly near the perpendicular.

Nazareth lies more than 1100 feet above the sea, and the cliff one has to mount from the plain is some hundred feet

high, with a track fit only for goats, or creatures as sure-footed. But even when you reach the top, three miles lie between you and the village, little better for the traveller than the cliff. Smooth sheets of limestone, stretches of loose rocks and stones of all sizes, at times as high as your horse; wild desolation on all sides, with a few goats and sheep pretending to pick up sustenance from invisible vegetation, depress the spirits, so that when the sweet little valley opens at last, its charms are wonderfully heightened by contrast with its approaches. This track could have been very little different two thousand years ago, and, indeed, I thought, when going along, that Christ must have seen very much the same details as the traveller of to-day. But Nazareth itself was a quiet retreat, where the Son of Mary could grow to His wondrous manhood, without a suspicion in the great world outside that such a miracle was ripening in its midst.

CHAPTER III.

JERUSALEM IN THE DAYS OF CHRIST.

THE Holy City lies in the central hills of Palestine, halfway between their western edge, on the inner side of the broad, rich, sea-coast plain, and their slope towards the Dead Sea, with the north end of which it is on a line. It is, indeed, exactly on the watershed, the rain-torrents streaming east and west from it towards the Mediterranean on the one side and the Dead Sea on the other. This silent, lifeless expanse, the "Sea of Lot" of the Arabs, with the flat line of the tableland of Moab on the farther side of its deep blue, is a striking feature in the view from the Mount of Olives; the landscape sinking towards it in great yellow steps to its waters, fifteen or sixteen miles off, but four thousand feet below, for Jerusalem lies nearly two thousand five hundred feet above the Mediterranean, the Mount of Olives rising over two hundred feet higher, while the Dead Sea lies nearly thirteen hundred feet below sea level. To the west of the Holy City the horizon is shut in close at hand by a number of bare gray swells of limestone, a little higher than Jerusalem, the only vegetation on which is threads of aromatic shrubs, rising along the innumerable cracks which seam the stone in every direction, like the markings on "brain coral." This scanty growth, though the only pasture of any sheep or goats of the neighbourhood, is not sufficient, however, to soften the dreary

desolation; for not only is it not green, but its amount is not great enough to shew at all from a distance.

A stretch of level ground connects the city with the north, all the other sides being separated from the country beyond by deep valleys. To the south, across the valley of Hinnom, the eye ranges over bare, brownish-gray, round swells, towards Hebron; those on the north of that ancient city, three thousand feet above sea level, marking the highest point of the "hill-country," which was the specially Jewish territory. The hills round Jerusalem bear names well known in history. On the east rise the yellow slopes of the Mount of Olives, looking down, at the summit, on the Temple enclosure, more than two hundred feet below, but separated from it by the rocky valley through which the Kedron occasionally pours as a winter torrent. Next Olivet, to the south, is the dark, bare "Hill of Offence," on which Pompey had encamped when he captured the city by fraud, and defiled the Holy of Holies by entering it. Round the south of the city sweeps the valley of Hinnom, with the bleak bare hill of Evil Counsel on its south side—the name rising from a fourteenth century legend that the house of Caiaphas, the high priest, was on it when the Jews plotted how they might kill our Lord. Another valley sloping up to the south, at the foot of this height of evil name, leads towards Bethlehem; its wide, rough hollow opening the view. "Hinnom" then sweeps northward, towards the Jaffa gate, on the north-west of the city, where the flat stretch of ground level with the town offers the only free passage from the city to the north. Down the east side of this neck of tableland runs a hollow, skirting the town on the north, and then sweeping southward along its east side; the valley of the Kedron

or of Jehoshaphat. Across the northern half of this rises the long, bare slope of Scopus, the hill on which Titus pitched his tent in the great siege. Surrounded thus on all sides, except at the level stretch outside the Jaffa gate, by deep, broad valleys, Jerusalem was in ancient times an almost unassailable mountain fortress. Looking down from the courts of the Temple, Christ had this characteristic of the Holy City before Him, the hills round closing the view, in their slow rise from the profound depths of broad ravines which stretched from beneath the city walls to their base. At the south-east angle, He would see the union of Hinnom and Kedron in a common gorge, sinking towards the Dead Sea so steeply that less than a mile and a quarter shewed a fall of over six hundred feet.

The city stood on two hills, divided only by narrow dips or valleys; that known at this time as Mount Zion, on the west; Mount Moriah on the east, about a hundred feet lower. In Christ's day the two were divided by a deep but narrow valley, then one of the busiest parts of the city, but filled up to the level around, since the fall of Jerusalem, by the wreck of destroyed dwellings and of the Temple walls and buildings. Strange to say, the Jewish population of to-day have their quarter over the vanished hollow in which, fathoms below, their forefathers swarmed in their narrow streets two thousand years ago. Bridges then joined the town and the sanctuary, the Temple wall skirting the east crest. On the west edge, over the little valley, which ran north and south, stood, at one time, a citadel known as Millo, famous even in the time of Solomon; and towards its opening into Hinnom, on the other side, were the tombs of David and the rest of the old Hebrew kings, dug out in spacious chambers, in the side

of the Temple hill. North of Moriah ran another hollow, east and west, cutting off the sacred hill from a district known as Bezetha, or the New Town; part of this depression still remaining, in the huge reservoir stretching outside the north wall of the Temple grounds, and till very recently thought by many to be the Pool of Bethesda. There was thus a part of the town on the other side of a hollow, north of the Temple area; but the "Old Town," known later, but not originally, as the city of David, lay on the southern part of what is now called "Zion;" the centre of the town, called Acra, or "the lower town," by Josephus, facing the west side of the Temple grounds, and including the dense population of the small but deep valley cutting them off from "Zion." Caves dug out of the rock, as ancient dwellings, abound, but had, in Christ's day, been mostly turned into cisterns, houses being built over them.

The Jerusalem of Christ was smaller than that of our day, for the third wall, which was built when even the second was found too confined, dated only from the time of Herod Agrippa, A.D. 41–44, and thus did not exist in Christ's lifetime. Even then, however, the space enclosed was not more than sufficient for a population of about 30,000, so that it would be safe to believe that when our Lord visited Jerusalem, it was from a third to a fourth smaller. The Holy City was in fact, according to our ideas, a very small place; for even in its narrow limits there were open spaces, such as are found in all Oriental towns, for camels and other beasts resting, and for public uses. Even now, moreover, the whole city with its walls would go into Hyde Park, London and leave a wide margin all round. The flat-roofed, windowless houses were doubtless much as we see them, the streets as narrow and

as filthy, the arched stone bazaars as dark and as crowded, the Temple space being an open flat area of about thirty-five acres, but not dotted with trees as at present.

The Temple hill was the "Zion" of those days,[1] that venerable name having been transferred to the higher hill on the west in later times. It was on the lower, or southern half of this, that David built his house, and lived, even after all the city was in his hands; "Zion," in fact, being often named as identical with "David's town."[2] The Temple grounds were not extended beyond the northern half of Moriah, or "Zion," till Herod enclosed the southern half also, in the spacious area of his new Temple. Here, also, had been the palace built by Solomon for his Egyptian queen. The Tyropœan Valley, between the two heights, formed the west side of this part of the sacred hill; and here were, as I have said, the royal tombs, which Ezekiel consequently condemned as a sacrilegious pollution of the Temple mount: the corpses of the Kings, as he said, having only a wall between them and God's sanctuary.[3] These tombs, however, continued to be a glory of Jerusalem after the destruction of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar, and are mentioned as such by St. Peter in his address at the Pentecost after Christ's death, so that they had been a familiar sight to our Lord.[4]

Though a hill town, standing nearly 2,500 feet above the sea, Jerusalem is, as I have said, not visible from a distance, "mountains" still higher standing "round it."[5] One must not think, however, of lofty summits girdling it round, but rather of so many earth-waves, just high

[1] Isa. viii. 18; xviii. 7. Jer. viii. 19. Ps. ix. 11; xlviii. 2, 3; l. 2; lxv. 1; lxxiv. 2; cxxviii. 5. Mic. iv. 2. Joel iii. 21. 1 Macc. iv. 37; vii. 33.

[2] 2 Sam. v. 7. 1 Kings viii. 1. 1 Chron. xi. 5. 2 Chron. v. 2.

[3] Ezek. xliii. 7-9. [4] Acts ii. 29. [5] Ps. cxxv. 2.

enough to shut out the view beyond them. Yet its very seclusion must have deepened the impression made by it on the Jewish pilgrim, when at last, from the north or the east, all at once, from a height close to it—Mount Scopus in the one case, or the head of the Mount of Olives in the other—the sacred hill, crowned by the sacred city, stood before him in all its beauty. Whether indeed he came from the west, the east, or the north, the spectacle of "the city of the Great King," throned amidst its garland of hills, may well account for the outburst of the poet: "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so Jehovah is round about His people, from henceforth even for ever."[1] And so when Jeremiah, coming from his home in Anathoth, a little north of the city, first saw it, after gaining the top of the Mount of Olives, it seemed to him "an inhabitress of the valley, and a rock of the plain," or, "a mountain in the open country."[2]

Wearied no doubt with the journey over the sun-scorched, desert-yellow, or brown-gray chalk hills, where a cup of cold water was a gift to the thirsty wanderer, deserving fond remembrance, Jesus, ever and again, from boyhood to the close of his short life, entered Jerusalem from the east or the north—the two chief lines of communication with the country; leading up, west, from Jericho, or south, from Samaria and Galilee, to the Holy City. Once within its gates, however, there was no longer a scarcity of water, though no spring at this time rises within the walls, and the only one there ever was is now buried under sixty feet of rubbish, on the west side of the Temple grounds, in the old Tyropœan valley. There, below the level of the foundations of the bridge, which, in

[1] Jer. xxi. 13. [2] Jer. xvii. 3.

Christ's day, stretched, in a span of over forty feet, across the hollow, and joined the Temple grounds to the west hill, a channel for water has been found, cut nearly twelve feet deep into the living rock. It was there long before the time of our Lord, for, in His day, twenty feet of earth and wreck had accumulated over it; but it was still used to provide water for the citizens; openings to let down buckets even now shewing us what was then the pavement or roadway. Where this spring comes from is not known; many fancying it a branch from the present stream, below the east side of the Temple hill, to which, two thousand years ago as now, the waters of the pool which we call "the Virgin's," and that of Siloam, lower down the valley, are due. From this eastern source, the town in these long-ago times drew a second supply of "living water," for two narrow tunnels had been cut through the rocks, at least as early as the days of Hezekiah, one of which led, and still leads, a stream to the "Pool of Siloam"—"the waters of Shiloah that go softly"[1]—while the other guided a second to a point inside the south-eastern wall, where access could be had to it, even in a siege, by means of a deep shaft and steps. But these supplies proved insufficient, especially in so warm a climate, for the wants of the citizens; and hence large rock cisterns had been excavated in the courts of very many of the houses, and duly cemented, to collect the rain, which is now the staple source of Jerusalem water. The water-carriers of the village of Siloam, however, supplement it by bringing up on their backs great black skins filled with the precious commodity from the Fountain of the Virgin, for daily sale in the streets, as they very probably did when our Saviour

[1] Isa. viii. 6.

was in Jerusalem. The Temple, in those times, had a vast supply for itself, a large part of the grounds being honeycombed with tanks and cisterns, excavated in the rock, so huge that one of them held 2,000,000, another 1,400,000 gallons, while the whole could store at least 10,000,000. The water to fill these was led to them in covered aqueducts, long since useless for the purpose, from beyond Bethlehem, in the south. Some of these dated from the old Hebrew monarchy; but one was made in Christ's day, by Pontius Pilate, who brought great trouble on himself by applying the treasure lying useless in the Temple vaults, to benefit the community in this vital requirement, which, however, not being strictly ecclesiastical, drew down on him the cry of sacrilege. There were, besides, the great pools, which we still see, though virtually in ruins. Outside the city, as He came from the north, Christ would have before Him, at the upper part of the valley of Hinnom, the tank known incorrectly, it would appear, as the Upper Pool of Gihon; at the other end of the valley, over against the south-east corner of the city, lay "Joab's Well." At the mouth of the Kedron Valley was the Pool of Siloam, close to the sacred hill; farther up, on the same side, was the fountain known as the "Virgin's," now reached by a sunken flight of sixteen steps, which lead to an arched structure of very old stones, from which Christ perhaps often looked, fourteen steps lower still, on the flowing water.

Then, rounding the corner of the town wall, on the north-east, there was the "Pool of Israel," a huge reservoir, formed, in ancient times, by building across the valley running outside the north wall of the Temple grounds, and then digging out and cementing the deep hollow thus

gained. It is now a place for ashes and rubbish of all kinds, rising in a foul mound, on the flat top of which, at one place, a thrifty citizen has made a vegetable garden. In Christ's day, however, the pool was one of the public reservoirs. A little way further to the west, on the right hand, was a double pool, which has recently been discovered in digging the foundations of a new house; and there is the great pool known as that of Hezekiah, now filthy and nearly empty, at the top of the slope leading down to the Temple area.

In Christ's day, thanks to the genius and energy of Herod the Great, the Holy City had entered on a period of prosperity, which flourished till the great siege in the year A.D. 70. The population increased, and the precincts in the north of the town were more and more covered with houses. From the Mount of Olives, the city looked imposing. In the foreground stood the Temple, with its magnificent enclosing wall and noble pillared porches, and broad fore-courts, over which the Temple-buildings rose, dazzling the eyes, when the sun shone on them, by the glitter of their roofs, adorned with gilded metal work, and of their marble outer walls, rich in golden decorations. On the north-west of the great Temple grounds rose the strong fortress Antonia, looking earnest and grim, with its smooth and lofty walls and towers. Beyond it the "New Town," Bezetha, climbed its slope, in flat-roofed streets, one over the other. Farther off stretched out gardens on gardens, and noble villas embowered amidst olive, almond, and pomegranate trees, safeguarded by hedges of prickly pear. It was thus, indeed, over the whole crest of the northern part of the city, as far as the upper arm of the Kedron Valley. South of the Temple lay a thickly peopled

quarter, the streets of which ran down to the bottom of the Tyropœan, where they joined those which sank into it on the other side from the "Upper Town." On the western and higher part of this was the huge palace of Herod, the home of the Roman procurator when he was in Jerusalem; the rock-like tower-castles built by the great king, rising from its walls;[1] Mariamne, Hippicus, and Phasael, which, as the highest of them, dominated the whole city. In the south-west of this quarter lay the theatre, with its great arena, offering a welcome break in the chaos of houses, but shocking the Jews, as an outrage against their religion. Looking eastward, down the slope towards the Temple, rose the Xystus—a covered colonnade; the council-chamber, and the palace of the Asmonean Jewish kings, used in Christ's day, and later, by members of the Herod family; and south from this, rose the stately houses of the chief citizens and dignified priests, with public buildings, such as the Office of the Records.[2] Then came the Tyropœan, with its small, densely packed houses, filling up the steep narrow cleft, parallel with the Temple enclosure. The northern half of what is now called "Zion," then known as Acra, ran due east in a line from the north wall of Herod's palace, to the Temple enclosure, and north to Antonia, forming nearly a square, which was specially the business part of the city, as Christ saw it, containing the gloomy, covered, stone bazaars, or, as we should call them, "arcades" characteristic of Jerusalem, as of other Eastern cities. Outside the town, on the west, lay gardens like those on the north, with broken ridges of weather-blackened limestone fretting the green, and shewing in many

[1] Jos., *Ant.*, xx. 2. *Bell. Jud.*, iv. 9, 11; v. 5, 6; v. 6, 1; vi. 6, 3; I. 2, 2; 3, 2; II. 3, 2.

[2] Jos., *Bell. Jud.*, ii. 17, 6.

parts rock-tombs, which, indeed, abounded all round the town, for there was little soil in which to bury the dead. It was hence necessary to lay them in chambers cut like larger or smaller caves into the limestone, more or fewer hollows on their sides, the size of corpses, being made to hold bodies, as the tomb was larger or smaller, though poor people were buried in the one spot on the side of Hinnom where the ground permitted interment.[1]

West of Acra, that is, north of Herod's palace, the part now covered by the north-west quarter of the town, there were few houses and no regular streets,[2] which is curiously shewn by the fact that, in comparison with the other quarters, very little rubbish has accumulated in this district.

The streets of the old Jerusalem of Christ's day were unusually narrow and crooked, even for an Eastern town; easy to barricade, so that its citizens could offer a strenuous defence, even after the walls had been taken,[3] while, on the other hand, they were readily choked by a fleeing multitude, so that hundreds were more than once trampled down or slaughtered, without being able to defend themselves.[4] It was on this account that Jesus thoughtfully exhorted his disciples, "Let him who, at the outbreak of the final catastrophe, is on the housetop, not come down to take anything out of his house,"[5] but let him, rather, flee along the flat roofs to the gates of the city. Recent excavations fully confirm the correctness of the hints which Josephus gives as to the narrowness of the streets; nor were they even paved in any way, till, on the advice of Agrippa II., white stone blocks were laid down in the

[1] Jer. xxvi. 23. 2 Kings xxiii. 6. Matt. xxvii. 7.
[2] Jos., *Bell. Jud.*, v. 6, 2. [3] Jos., *Bell. Jud.*, ii. 15, 5.
[4] Jos., *Ant.*, xx. 5, 3; *Bell. Jud.*, ii. 14, 9; vi. 8, 5.
[5] Matt. xxiv. 17.

year A.D. 64.[1] The centre part, moreover, according to Eastern usage, was much lower than the sides; beasts using this trough, and the rain water pouring along through it, while the people walked on the narrow raised bordering paths; as, in Revelation,[2] the river of water of life ran "in the midst of the street" of the heavenly Jerusalem. The sides of this celestial river, we are told, are shaded by fruit trees; but in the earthly city the rain-floods were the only stream, and instead of verdant banks, there were only very narrow footpaths before the crowded houses, as in the Pompeii of to-day. Yet the painful narrowness of most of the lane-like streets did not exclude the existence of a few chief thoroughfares, broad enough for wheeled vehicles, and level in the middle like our own roads.[3]

It must not be thought, however, that the present Jerusalem is that known to our Saviour. The surface trodden by His sacred feet lies buried at least twenty feet below that of to-day, as Roman London lies deep down under the streets of our times. Hollows have been filled up, bridges destroyed, the Temple razed to its foundations, generation after generation of houses and public buildings have mouldered into dust; the priest, the Pharisee, the scribe, the rabbi, have all vanished; and a strange medley of the most varied races forms its mainly sordid population. But the locality is the same, and the hills round, the open Temple space, the Oriental character of both town and country; kneeling camels in any open space; black-eyed Arabs from the wilderness; bearded, dark-skinned Hebrews, and, over all, the same skies, helping, together, to carry one back, at least in some degree, to the Jerusalem of 2,000 years ago.

[1] Jos., *Ant.*, xx. 9, 7. [2] Rev. xxii. 1 (R. V.). [3] Jos., *Ant.*, ix. 9, 3.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TEMPLE AS CHRIST SAW IT.

HEROD THE GREAT, having taken Jerusalem in the summer of B.C. 37, was, thenceforward, secure on his throne, except from plots in his own circle. His energetic, and in some aspects imperial, nature, could now gratify his pride and his interests, by embellishing and strengthening his capital; and this he did so ably as to make his reign no less famous for his embellishment of the Holy City, than that of his patron Augustus for that of Rome, which he was said to have "found brick and left marble." Nor was his magnificence, in this direction, confined to Jerusalem. It shewed itself over all his dominions, and even beyond them. The long civil wars had desolated many provinces of the empire, and opened to the local princes a splendid and useful flattery of the emperor, after he had finally vanquished all opposition, and made himself supreme over the Roman world. To win his favour, they set themselves to rebuild ruined cities, and to adorn them and their provincial capitals with temples dedicated to the all-powerful ruler, as to a god, and with theatres, amphitheatres, colonnades, and, above all, with great structures in which games might be celebrated every four years in his honour. Towns and cities thus raised from their ashes, or beautified at enormous expense, were then called after him, or some member of his family. In

all these fashions of the day, Herod distinguished himself; but he was, also, unwearied in raising other architectural creations, useful or grand. After eight or nine years of restless activity in connection with the parties contending for the sovereignty of the world, he was at last free, about B.C. 28, to build a theatre in Jerusalem and an amphitheatre on one of the hills south of it.[1] Next year he rebuilt Samaria, calling it Sebaste, "the August," after Augustus. Pestilence, famine, and outside wars checked his schemes of this kind for the next few years, but about B.C. 24 he was able to build himself a great palace, lavishly adorned with marbles and gold, on a wide space extending east and south, from the present Jaffa gate, raising in the line of its wall three tremendous towers, with huge smoothed blocks of stone slanting far up from their base, and of amazing strength above, as we still see in what remains of them. Part of the one called Phasælus, after his brother, rises from a huge fosse on the right hand as you climb the valley of Hinnom to the Jaffa gate; a second is still perfect—the castle, now called "the Tower of David," but, then, "Mariamne," after his best loved wife, whom he nevertheless murdered. It towers from the great ditch on the right hand of the street leading from the Jaffa gate eastward. The third, called after his friend Hippicus, stood where the Jaffa gate now stands, the other

[1] Josephus, in *Ant.* xv. 8, § 1, says Herod built a theatre at Jerusalem, also a very great amphitheatre in the plain, both very costly works, but the sites have been a problem until recently. The amphitheatre, it is now found, was situated on the northern and steep slope of a hill between the two valleys, "Wady Yasul" on the south, and "Wady as Shama" on the north, both going eastwards, and falling into the Kedron Valley or Wady en Nar. The hill consists of soft limestone in which the amphitheatre was carved. The seats, like steps, are still recognizable, although much worn and decayed. The diameter of the arena circle was 132 feet, and the present condition of the ground shews the outer boundary diameter to have been about 200 feet.—"Palestine Exploration Fund," *July*, 1887, p. 161.

two being only a short distance from it, south and east. He had already, in the time of Mark Antony, strengthened the castle at the north-west angle of the Temple area, scarping the rock so as to present a perpendicular face to attack, and surrounding the walls with the same smooth, massy stonework as afterwards made the mighty towers on his palace walls so nearly impregnable. In the towns of his kingdom which were not Jewish, and in the province of Syria, he further built many temples, chiefly in honour of Augustus, adorning them profusely with the sculptures which were abhorrent to his Jewish subjects. In B.C. 22 he began a still greater undertaking, the creation of a new port, on the grandest scale, to be called Cæsarea, and in due time it boasted of its noble harbour, its great breakwater, its huge barracks for sailors, its promenades on the great piers, and of a temple in honour of Augustus, rising on a height in the centre of the town, and seen far off at sea. Twelve years were required to complete this great work, but, at last, ten years before the birth of Christ, it was finished, so that our Lord saw it when it was still, as it were, fresh from the hands of the builders. On the plain of Sharon he built a town which he called Antipatris, in honour of his father, and at Jericho, a castle named Kypros, after his mother. In the rich district north of Jericho he raised a town called Phasælis, after his brother, and restored Anthedon, renaming it Agrippeion, after Agrippa, the son-in-law of Augustus. Two new fortresses, called after himself, Herodeion, were built by him ; one, in which he was afterwards buried, on a hill about eight miles south of Jerusalem ; the other, farther off, in the same region. The more northerly of the two contained a splendid palace, and a Roman town was built on the plain

below. In addition to all this he built other palaces at Machærus and Masada, which great fortresses he carefully restored. But it would be vain to enumerate all such triumphs of his energy. New fortresses were built, or old ones repaired, and military colonies were founded wherever it seemed advisable. Nor was his architectural ambition confined to Palestine. He built a temple to Apollo at Rhodes; embellished the town of Nicopolis, founded by Augustus at Actium, with most of its public buildings; rebuilt the pillared arcades of the island of Chios; erected pillared and covered promenades on both sides of the main street of Antioch; built baths and fountains at Ascalon; and adorned Tyre and Sidon, Byblus and Berytus, Tripolis, Ptolemais, and Damascus, and even Athens and Lacedæmon, with costly proofs of his magnificence.

But the greatest of all his achievements as a builder was the Temple he raised at Jerusalem.[1] Anxious at once to gain a name, and also the favour of the people, by this stupendous undertaking, he declared it a pious duty, lying on his conscience, to raise a new sanctuary on the same scale of splendour as that of Solomon, instead of the now decaying structure of inferior size and beauty, raised amidst the contentions and delays of the ages after the Return. This he finally did, though the rabbis sought to hinder him by whispers that he wished to pose as the Messiah in proposing such a task, since the prophet Zechariah had described the "Man whose name is the Branch"—that is, the Messiah—as being pointed out by his building the Temple of the Lord.[2] A thousand waggons, we are told, were got ready, to bring stones for

[1] Jos., *Ant.*, xv. 11. *Bell. Jud.* v. 5 is the great source of our information respecting Herod's Temple, with the Talmudic tract *Middoth*.

[2] Zech. vi. 12, 13.

the structure, though they were, probably, rather sledges dragged by men, as in the Assyrian sculptures; for wheeled vehicles, except a few war chariots, were unknown, at least in the hills, and the cattle to drag them were neither strong enough nor in sufficient numbers in these uplands. No wheels, moreover, could have sustained the weight of such huge stones. Ten thousand skilled workmen were hired, and as none but consecrated hands could touch the sacred building, or help to raise it, a thousand priests were taught to work in wood or in stone, that they alone might raise at least the holiest parts of the actual sanctuary; this course having been followed already in the restoration of the Temple under the Maccabees.[1] The foundations of Solomon's structure were, in many places, replaced by new ones, and the plateau was greatly enlarged. It had, indeed, apparently already been extended, towards the north, by the Hasmonean kings, whose fortress, Baris, on the north-west corner, was now thoroughly restored, while a subterranean passage was dug from it to the towers of the great east gate of the Temple area, and the fortress renamed, as has been said, Antonia, after Mark Antony. Extensive substructures were built on the south-east of the area, visible even now, and distinguishable by their finely bevelled stones. The building was commenced in the twentieth or twenty-first year before Christ, and the halls and outer walls completed in eight years, while eighteen months sufficed for the priestly artificers to finish the sanctuary proper. Yet there was so much to do that the fore-courts were only finished under Agrippa II. and the procurator Albinus, in A.D. 64, thirty years after the Crucifixion. The area

[1] 1 Macc. iv. 43.

in which the Temple stood had been largely extended towards the south, where a mighty wall, nearly 1,000 feet long, rose 150 feet high in most of its length. The enclosing walls on the other sides, also, were magnificent: that in the west, as we know from the labours of Wilson and Warren, towering up more than 100 feet from the Tyropœan, in a line beyond that of Solomon's "courts," their foundations being afterwards buried in the rubbish which has raised this part of the town to the level of the western height, now called "Zion."

The stones used were of great size, a whole row still seen on the south-east corner measuring nineteen feet, or even more, in length, and four feet in height; one of them, twenty-two feet above the present surface, weighing, it is believed, over a hundred tons. The disciples, therefore, might well say, "Master, look, what stones!"[1] Pillared arcades ran along the enclosing walls; that to the south being most imposing. "This was the most noteworthy structure," says Josephus, "under the sun, for though the valley below was already so deep that the eyes swam as one looked down, Herod had raised on the wall thus so lofty, gigantic columned arcades, so that to look down from the roof into this double abyss made one giddy, before his eyes reached the bottom." This description seems, however, to refer to the wall on the east side, over the Kedron Valley, which at the south corner, now heaped up with rubbish, fell very abruptly, to a depth of over eighty feet lower than it shews to-day. Between this portico, which was built in the style of a basilica, and the open Temple area, stretched the "fore-court of the heathen," separated, through its whole length, by a low parapet wall, along

[1] Mark xiii. 1.

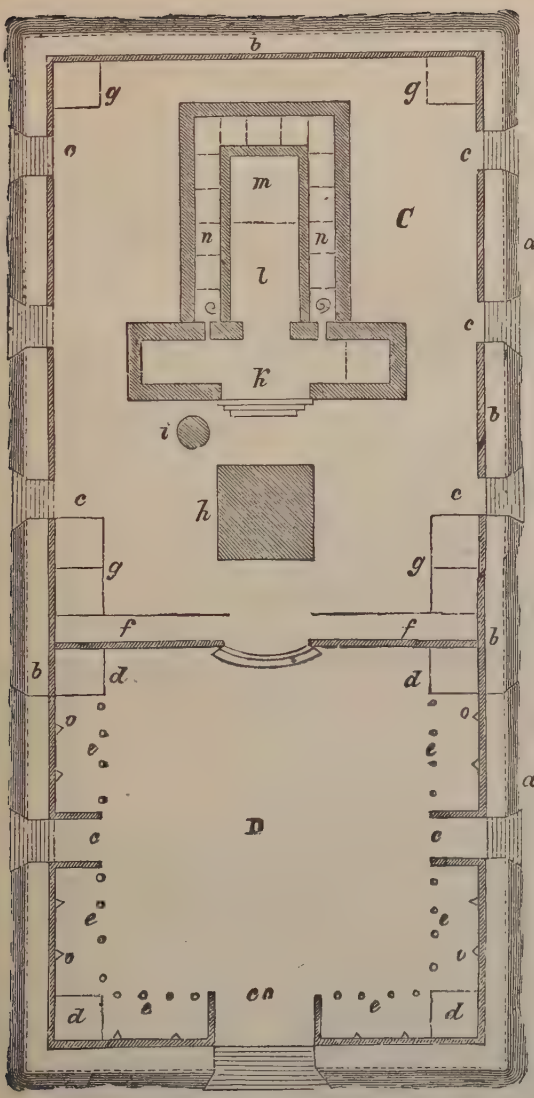
which, at fixed spaces, were tablets on pillars, in Latin and Greek, prohibiting any one not a Hebrew from passing farther inwards. One of these was discovered in 1871, partly buried in the foundations of a building not far from the Haram area; the inscription on it, in Greek, reading as follows: "No stranger is to enter within the balustrade round the Temple and enclosure. Whoever is caught, will be responsible to himself for his death, which will ensue." This inscription, repeated as it was at each few yards, must have been often seen by our Lord, and could not fail to shock that all-embracing charity, which had other sheep besides those of the Jewish fold, and set so little by the claims of either Moriah or Gerizim, as to tell the Samaritan woman that the hour was coming when men would worship the Father neither at the one nor the other.

The whole Temple, with its courts and porticoes, rose in terraces along the slopes of Moriah, the top of which had been made level by substructures and filling up, to more than double the area of Solomon's day. On the crest of the hill stood the Temple itself, surrounded, at lower heights, by its fore-courts and noble arcades. Only the white hard limestone from the quarries, still stretching, dark and dismal, under the north-west of the city, was used; a stone very different from the soft strata which come to the surface over the land, and form its hills and glens. Over this marble-like limestone, a large amount of gold, in plates, was spread where ornamentation was desirable, all the roofs of the many buildings being, moreover, surmounted by close rows of gilded spikes, that the birds might not defile them by alighting. To pilgrims approaching it, "the Sanctuary," says Josephus, "appeared like a snow-covered mountain, where it was

THE ANCIENT TEMPLE GROUNDS, WITH THE "DOME OF THE ROCK" (MOSQUE OF OMAR) AND THE MOSQUE EL AKSA BEHIND: THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE KNIGHTS-TEMPLARS DURING THE CRUSADING PERIOD.

not gilt; but, when the morning sun fell on the sheets of gold with which much of it was overspread, it shone so that one had to turn his eyes aside."[1] The wide space enclosed within the outer walls of the sacred grounds, afforded room for vast multitudes of worshippers, but hatred of idol groves had forbidden the clumps of olives and palms which, in olden times, had offered a welcome shade for devotion, recalling the words of the psalm respecting the righteous: "Planted in the house of Jehovah, they shall flourish in the courts of our God."[2] It is, and has always been, a noble open space, forming a field of which the sides and ends are of unequal lengths, though this is not noticed except in measurement. To have created such a level "close," on the steeply sloping sides of a hill, might well have tasked both Solomon and Herod, with all their command of forced labour. The great outer wall had three gates on its west side, that is, towards the town; and at least two gates on the south; perhaps, however, only leading to the aqueducts underground, not to the "courts." As the Temple faced the east, that side boasted of the great gate, through which Jews of both sexes entered, if they were "clean." It was, apparently, near the walled-up "golden gate" of the present day. The Sanctuary stood, not in the middle of the area, but rather towards the north-west, so that the open space was much greater on the south and east than on the north and west. Pillared arcades ran along all sides of the enclosing wall: the outermost close to the wall; the arcade on the east, running the whole length of that side, being known as "Solomon's Porch,"[3] and boasting three rows of marble pillars, thirty feet high, forming

[1] Jos., *Bell. Jud.*, v. 5, 6. [2] Ps. xcii. 13. [3] John x. 23.



a. Bounds of outer court of the Temple proper.

b. Store chambers.

c. Gates into the Temple.

d. Halls for ecclesiastical courts, etc.

e. Limits of Court of the Heathen, marked by pillars.

f. Court of the men.

g. g. Store houses, halls, etc.

h. Altar of burnt-offering.

i. Brazen sea. The place of slaughtering was on the other side of the brazen altar.

k. Court before the Temple.

l. The Holy Place.

m. The Holy of Holies.

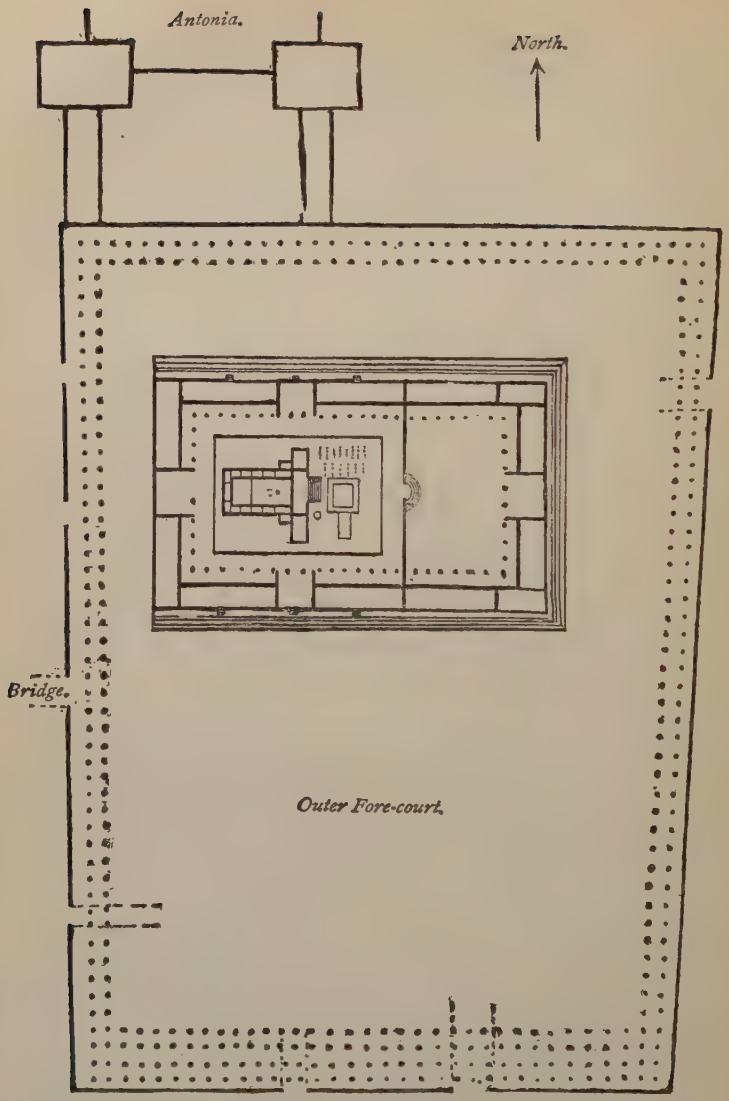
n. Buildings against the Temple wall for sacred uses.

C. Court of the Priests.

D. Court of the Women.

Outside all these ran the great covered porches along all four sides of the Temple space: that on the south—the Royal porch, consisting of a broad arcade between two that were narrower, the whole supported by carved pillars; those on the other side, of two rows of arches. This plan, however, has the great mistake of making the Temple face north and south. The entrance was from the east, and it faced east and west. The plan is that of Pfleiderer.

TEMPLE AT JERUSALEM IN THE TIME OF CHRIST.



THE TEMPLE GROUNDS (*Schürer*).

The Temple is put in its proper orientation, in this plan; entering from the east, so that one faced the west, in looking to the Holy of Holies.

two promenades, each forty feet broad, with a vaulted roof of cedar, and paved with a mosaic of many coloured stones. The Royal porch, on the south, however, was especially famous, for it gloried in four rows of forty columns each, so massy, it was alleged, as to need three men to stretch round them, while their capitals were of the lovely Corinthian order. Of the three promenades formed by these four rows of pillars, the roof of the centre one was more than a hundred feet high, while those of the others were over fifty, the centre walk being about fifty feet broad, while the others were thirty. The roof, covering the whole, was of rich carved work in low relief. It was in this and the other magnificent piazzas, that the priests had rented-off spaces for the sellers of whatever was needed by those offering; from salt to clay Passover-ovens, and from doves to cattle, obtaining for themselves a large revenue by turning God's house, as Christ said, into a den of thieves. The tablets warning heathen and the unclean against intruding further, hung on the posts of a balustrade of open stonework, along the inner edge of these arcades. The "clean" Jew, on the other hand, passed through the openings in this, to a terrace fourteen steps up, but only 13 or 14 feet broad, forming a second protecting barrier round the wall of the inner courts, which rose on the slope of the hill, so that, though over 50 feet high outside, it was only about half the height on the inner side, a long flight of stairs leading to the landing above. On the north and south this wall had four gates, on the east only two; one only on each side being free to women. On the west there was no door. Narrow arcades ran along this wall, with a single row of pillars, one at each side of the gates, which were 40 and 20 feet high respect-

ively, with two-leaved doors, richly mounted with plates of gold and silver: the east door, known as "the Nicanor," being especially splendid. Inside the space thus fenced off lay the Court of the Women, on the east; according to the Talmud, 180 feet square. In the corners of this court were offices for the wood used in the offerings, and for wine and oil, and also places for cooking consecrated flesh, for cleansing lepers, and other uses. Near the gate were thirteen alms chests, shaped like a trumpet. The Court of the Men lay at the top of fifteen steps rising from this, surrounded on all sides by the Temple buildings, and measuring about 180 feet north and south, and 250 east and west. In the corner of this space were other offices, for salt used on the altar, for water, and for wood, and chambers for the sittings of the Sanhedrim, so that neither in the courts of the men nor of the women was there room for many worshippers at a time, especially as a strip, about 15 feet broad, was cut off the men's court by a low stone wall, to form the Court of the Priests. In this stood the great brazen altar, about 20 feet high and 40 feet long and broad, built of unhewn stones. Underneath it was a hollow, through which the blood flowed off to the valley of the Kedron. A little to the south stood the lavers for the priests; in the north-west was a building in which the priests on duty slept, and could warm themselves; in a deep arch they could wash away the blood from their hands and persons. All the courts were paved with smooth stone. From the Court of the Priests twelve steps led up to the Temple itself, which had before it a pillared portico about 4 feet deep, 70 broad, and 120 high, a sloping roof in Greek style, in carved cedar, rising about 14 feet higher. From the ceiling of this hung a

gigantic gilded vine, with grapes of immense size, visible all over the Temple grounds, and leading, perhaps, to the widespread belief that the Jews worshipped Bacchus. The Holy Place and the inner chamber, the Holy of Holies, were each about 80 feet high, chambers rising above, as it appears, to the height of the portico. They were only about 27 feet broad, but on the north and south sides rose a structure about 14 feet deep, containing thirty-eight small rooms, in three stories, rising considerably higher than the sacred chambers between them. At the sides, also, the portico stretched out, beyond the Temple buildings, for nearly 30 feet on each side, supplying rooms for such purposes as storing the knives used in sacrificing, etc. It was upon the roof of these structures that the gilded spikes were fixed. The entrance to the portico was over 30 feet broad and nearly 100 feet high, but, as it had no door, the whole Temple within was visible. The Holy Place was shut in by gates over 70 feet high, and about 20 broad, and was, besides, veiled by a rich Babylonian tapestry of the four holy colours, violet, white, scarlet, and purple, said by Josephus to be symbols of the four elements, air, earth, fire, and water. The Holy of Holies was separated only by a curtain from the Holy Place, and was entirely empty; the top of the hill, the reputed resting-place of the Ark—still seen and venerated, in the lovely building known as the Dome of the Rock, formerly called the Mosque of Omar—rising in its centre, according to Jewish tradition. No spot, indeed, could be more sacred, for it was in all probability the place on which, when he had bought the hill-top from Araunah the Jebusite, David sacrificed. Nor is it to be seen, even now, within its jealously guarded sanctuary, without awe, from the mystery

surrounding it; a mystery intensified by the cavern below, to which you descend by a flight of steps, a hole opening in its roof and a circular slab of marble sunk in its floor, over a mysterious well, but never uplifted, echoing hollow when struck. Temples, indeed, were often built over a well. Thus, the Birs-Nimroud inscription of Nebuchadnezzar says, that when he finished building the Tower of the Seven Planets at Borsippa, he found the water springing up beneath it had not been kept in order. In the Holy Place stood the seven-branched lamp, the table of shewbread, and the altar of offering. In the portico were two tables, one of marble, the other of gold, on which the priests set out the new shewbread each week; and in the priests' court were pillars, with rings to which the beasts for sacrifice were tied, marble tables on which to cut them up, and other accessories to such a form of worship. As, in a cathedral, the masons are never without some work, so with the Temple. A subterranean passage of considerable breadth was excavated, to join the sanctuary grounds to the west hill, and thus allow troops to be poured into them from Herod's castles near the Jaffa gate, in case of a riot or revolt, and a bridge was thrown across the Tyropœan, joining the Temple area to the upper western hill. Over this bridge—of which the spring of an arch in the south-west Temple wall, and some stones, weighing in one instance ten tons, buried under more than eighty feet of rubbish, are all that remain—Christ no doubt often walked. The great pillared arcades were His favourite haunt in the holy precincts. The stern castle of Antonia, on its thirty feet high perpendicular rock—rising thus because, beneath it, the sacred rock had been levelled into part of the Temple area—frowned down on Him as on others, when they

passed over the sacred area. Porters with huge burdens of all kinds staggered across, by short cuts, from gate to gate, to His indignant annoyance, to shorten their way with their loads.[1] The Pharisee with the broadest of phylacteries, the rabbi expounding in the porticoes some text of the Law; the poor publican standing far back as unworthy to approach God; the Israelite indeed, prostrate in devotion in the "courts"; the thoughtless pilgrims, glad to have reached Jerusalem, but thinking their visit a holiday; the rich in fine robes; the poor man in one garment, all passed before our Lord and were duly noted by Him.

Yet the Temple hill was not the same then as it is now. On the west side, the rubbish under which the natural surface lies buried is, in one place, 80 feet deep, and in another still more. At the south-west it is 85 feet deep; at the south-east corner you have to go 78 or 80 feet below the present surface to find the original height of the wall; on the east side, 100 feet of stone chippings and rubbish cover all the slope of the Kedron Valley up to the wall, the depth rising to even 125 feet towards the north-east corner. The outline of the hill must thus have been very different 2,000 years ago. What was once the great pool, extending for 360 feet along the north side of the old Temple area, 126 feet wide and 80 feet deep, is perhaps the only feature associated with the Temple, as it was in Christ's day, which remains unchanged in our own.[2]

[1] Mark xi. 16.

[2] In the Royal Museum at Paris there are said to have formerly been some relics attributed by tradition to the Temple of Solomon. They consisted of three pieces of porphyry pillars, two, of more than three and a half feet in diameter, the other, five feet in diameter. Unfortunately they were thought admirable for table tops, and were sliced down for this end! There were also, it is said, steps of porphyry, from the Temple—worn by the feet of those entering or leaving it.—Sauval, *Les Antiquités de Paris*, iii. 16.

CHAPTER V.

CHRIST'S FIRST PASSOVER.[1]

All that we know of our Lord for thirty years of His life is contained in twelve verses of a chapter of St. Luke's Gospel. It is impossible to realize clearly what is meant by His "advancing in wisdom," for a mind precocious enough to have so pondered the deepest questions as to be able, at twelve years of age, to discuss them intelligently with gray-bearded doctors, can be tried by no ordinary standard. I have traced, in my "Life of Christ," the influences which must have helped, at a place like Nazareth, to develop this "wisdom," but even when these are enumerated, how much must remain unimaginable in the growth of such a nature! That He knew the "Law and the Prophets" so well, even in His boyhood, shews that He must have read and studied them from His earliest years. A father was bound to instruct his son in the Law,[2] but as some parents were not qualified to do this, schools were established very generally, shortly before the destruction of the city. This, however, was after Christ's day, so that He must have been mainly indebted to home teaching and that of the synagogue worship. Yet, possibly, there may have been in Nazareth such a humble school as I saw over the hill from it, at Cana, where the clay floor of a flat-roofed cottage was covered with brown-

[1] Luke ii. 41–52. [2] Hamburger, i. 671.

faced boys and girls, each holding a kind of "slate" of wood or metal, on which they learned writing and reading at the same time, by putting down, from the old turbaned master's dictation, a sentence of the Koran, to be learned off simultaneously; all reciting it aloud, with indescribable din, over and over again, their little bodies swaying backwards and forwards as they did so. But, as Philo and Josephus shew, the education of a Jewish child meant almost wholly the teaching him "the Law," consuming zeal for which, not general love of knowledge, kindled the enthusiasm for "instruction" which marked the close of the national history. To read and write the Hebrew characters in which it was written, was the first step; elementary schools being called, from this, "writing houses." To know "the Law," it was, of course, necessary to be able to read it, and hence "books of the Law" were already, in the times before Christ, to be found in many private families.[1] Indeed, a Jew would part with everything rather than his sacred roll, as was seen in the case of a Levite who died in a khan while on a journey, his only effects being his staff, his wallet, and his copy of the Law.[2] With the learning of the words of the Law, however, the child was also, from the earliest, trained to honour it in its rabbinical applications, as well as its moral duties, and boys were required, even from the tenderest years, to be taken to the great feasts at Jerusalem. The strictest school of rabbis held that every child who could ride on its father's shoulder from the city to the Temple should be taken; the less strict school required every child who could walk the same short distance, holding on by its father's hand, was to attend; but it would appear from

[1] 1 Macc. i. 56 f. [2] Mischna Jebamoth, xvi. 7, fin.

St. Luke, that children living far from Jerusalem first went up at the end of their twelfth year; the Feast of Tabernacles, especially, being that to which their early interest was thus turned. As soon as the first indications of approaching puberty shewed themselves, the young Israelite was pledged to a full observance of the Law, and from that time entered on all the rights and duties of a full-grown man. But the privilege of eating the Passover was not granted a boy till he was fourteen, and, indeed, the Book of Jubilees prescribed twenty as the proper age, so that Jesus would not eat the Passover when first he went up to the feast with Joseph and Mary.

The pilgrimages to the different feasts were the great "outings" of the year, and must have been very happy times to those who had not to come from beyond reasonable distances. A yearly gathering of Mohammedans in Jerusalem during Passion Week, designed, apparently, to counterbalance the influx of the Christian element at that time, may perhaps help us to realize in some measure, leaving out modern features, what was to be seen at the great feasts in our Saviour's day. During the sacred week the peasants throng to the Holy City from all parts, marching in bands to the sound of drums and pipes and singing. Halting at a hill called Nebi Musa, "the prophet Moses," overlooking the Dead Sea, and on the way to Jerusalem, each company sacrifices a lamb and eats it with singing and dancing. A banner, supplied by the Turkish government, is brought down by a body of Turkish cavalry from Jerusalem to this point, from which it is carried up again to the Holy City, escorted by the cavalry and by the motley crowd of pilgrims, the wild and strange procession being greeted, as it rounds the shoulder of

Mount Olivet, with salvoes of artillery from St. Stephen's Gate, and by the shouts of multitudes on the hill slopes overlooking the valley of the Kedron, and on the walls, roof-tops, and high points of the city. The whole scene recalls the triumphal entry of our Lord, by the same road, on Palm Sunday. When at Khan Minieh, a sweet green plain on the Lake of Galilee, a great company of Greek Church pilgrims from Damascus, going up to Jerusalem for Easter, suddenly arrived at this favourite camping ground. There were perhaps 500 persons in all, of both sexes and all ages, from childhood to hoary hairs. Tents rose in a few minutes on all sides, and were speedily the centres of family life, as completely as if they had always stood there. Horses, mules, and donkeys were picketed in every direction. Fires of dry thistle and thorn stalks and twigs were speedily lighted, and meals cooked and eaten, amidst intense excitement of hurry, and high spirits. This over, the evening was given up to mirth. In one tent, the company sang to the clapping of hands; in another, to an extemporized drum in the shape of a copper jug beaten by a key; in a third, to the thrum of a guitar or accordion. The choruses were very noisy; the hand-clapping almost as much so. Women and men sat together, with children intermixed, for a child taken on pilgrimage thus, especially if it be dipped in the Jordan, is saved the trouble and expense of the journey later in life. There never was a merrier set of people. Their laughter was itself music, speaking, as it did, of hearts for the moment without a care. Yet it was, in name, a religious pilgrimage, though religion had not as yet come to the top, so far from Jerusalem. Nor is it surprising that such journeys are not regarded, any more than the crusades

were, as very helpful to morals. Shouting and firing of guns and pistols made rest impossible till quite late, but at last, all had lain down, some on the grass inside their tents, many in the open air, all in their ordinary clothes. Would the Jewish pilgrimages be very much different?

The almost incredible number of lambs and goats killed at a Passover, in the small limits of the Temple grounds, must surely have been very dangerous to the public health, from the ignorance of sanitary laws in those times, and the physical impossibility, as it would seem, of getting rid, in a place like Jerusalem, of the vast amount of blood and offal from the 256,500 lambs, said by Josephus to have been slain at a single Passover;[1] not to speak of the assembling of 2,700,000 people, if we may trust his figures, outside and inside the city. Cholera breaks out, year by year, at the place near Mecca where the annual Mohammedan sacrifices are offered, though the number of beasts of all kinds, large and small, from camels to small kids, slain there, is at present only about 70,000. All these are slain in one day, the 10th of Zil Hijja, and nearly all of them from 9 A.M. to noon. The odours from this gigantic holocaust are described, even by hajis themselves, as being awful beyond description, and no attempt whatever is made by the local authorities to remove the nuisance. It is from this "Devil's Punchbowl," as Burton calls it, that the annual epidemic of cholera emanates, and is conveyed by the hajis to their various countries, in the pilgrim ships of Jeddah. But if this be the state of things when the sacrifices, though so great, are only about a fourth as many as those said to have been killed at a Jewish Passover, what must have been the insanitary horrors inseparable from it?

[1] Jos., *Bell. Jud.*, vi. 9, 3.

for the East is, all alike, sublimely indifferent to public hygiene. Nor was the presence of such vast multitudes less dangerous to the authorities, for seditions were very apt to break out among them, since religious excitement, in expectation of the appearance of a great national leader, the Messiah, or anointed of God, was at fever heat in every bosom.[1]

The recognized expounders of the law, known as rabbis, a title of honour equivalent to our "master" or "doctor," and meaning, in effect, "illustrious man," were fitly centred in the Temple courts, where rooms for their lectures were assigned them, in the chambers where the so-called Sanhedrim held its sittings. With opening manhood, the youth of the day, seeking what we should now call a "liberal education," betook themselves to these "schools," to hear the exposition of the Law, in the ponderous interminable style of these pundits. Microscopic comments on every word or even letter, for deep allegorical meanings were attached not only to successive verses, but to every verbal detail, however minute and apparently trifling, were listened to as embodied wisdom. No fees were paid for this instruction for a long time after Christ's day, free gifts from outside, or, as we say, "voluntary subscriptions," being the only recognized emolument. Numbers of rabbis of each of the two rival schools of the day, the narrower and the more liberal, sat in their "class rooms," elevated on a semi-circular couch or divan; for there was always quite a gathering of them, though only one led the instruction, while—as in the Arab University at Cairo—the students sat cross-legged on the ground before them. With the loss of national independ-

[1] Jos., *Ant.*, xvii. 9, 2. *Bell. Jud.*, i. 3; Matt. xxvi. 5; Luke xiii. 1.

ence, the intellect of the nation, shut out from politics, indifferent to art, and contemptuous towards all races but the Jew, concentrated its energies on the sacred writings, regarded by them as a treasure, possession of which was a national glory, indefinitely greater than that of any other part of mankind. For, had not God made the world, said the Jew, "for our sakes, and as for the other peoples, who also come of Adam, He had said that they are nothing, but are like spittle, and the abundance of them to a drop that falleth from a vessel. But we are Thy people, whom Thou hast called Thy firstborn, Thy only begotten, and Thy fervent lovers."[1] Passionately trusting, in their unique spiritual pride, that Jehovah would, some day, it might be the next, send forth a great deliverer, His Messiah, to blast and destroy those who held them in subjection, and to make the Jew supreme over all men, their cry rose continually, "Behold, Lord, these heathen, who have ever been reputed as nothing, have begun to be lords over us, and to devour us. If the world were made for our sakes, why do we not possess an inheritance of the world (that is ours?): how long shall this endure?" To keep alive and intensify this fanaticism, it was essential to train up the youth in the virtual worship of that "Law," which was the Divine charter of the temporal and eternal prerogatives of the chosen race. A fierce bigotry and intolerance, unimaginable except by a Jew, was thus the atmosphere of these schools, though the sacred spirit of the holy books could not fail to teach, besides, much that was noble and true, in morality and religious reverence. In some, these took root; in too many, the only lessons learned were monstrous national pride, and contempt of mankind at large. In any

[1] 2 Esdras vi. 55–58.

case, the Law was acquired by heart throughout, so that Josephus could say, "Among us every child must learn to read, so that you will hardly find a Jewish boy who is not at home in our written language, and hence you meet so many poor Jewish fathers, who deny themselves even the necessaries of life, to secure education for their children." The "rabbis" were held in great reverence, Scripture texts being quoted freely, as intended to record their praise. Thus the words, "the rows of jewels on the cheeks of the bride" in the Song of Songs,[1] were said to mean the scribes, and the teachers of children. The "chains on her neck" were the children. The gardens on the river sides, in Numbers,[2] were the teachers of the young; pouring wisdom, understanding, and quickness from their hearts into those of their charge. The words, "to the upright of way, I will shew the salvation of God,"[3] were understood of the teacher who conscientiously taught the Law to his scholars. In the verse "Touch not Mine anointed, and do My prophets no harm,"[4] the anointed were the children; the prophets, their teachers. The reverence to be paid to a rabbi, it was said, was to be like that paid to God Himself, and he who entertained a rabbi was said to have had God for a guest. If a father and a rabbi each carry a burden, a son is to bear that of the rabbi rather than that of his father; if a father and a rabbi were in prison, a son must deliver the rabbi before he tried to deliver his parent. The scholar was to do everything for his rabbi that a slave does for his master, except taking off his shoe! Yet, in their schools, the lads attending might freely ask questions and discuss the instructions given, and it was through this

1. Song of Sol. i. 10. 3. Ps. l. 23 (correct text).
2. Num. xxiv. 6. 4. 1 Chr. cv. 15.

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that Jesus, though only a boy, could argue point after point with the "doctors," at whose feet He was sitting. But what must have been the thoughtfulness of so young a child? What, His intense musing on the Law, and how intimate His knowledge of it, to enable Him to maintain such apparently unequal disputation?

The great Mecca caravan, when it sets out from Damascus or Cairo, encamps, on the first day, after a short journey, and waits for a night or even more, to let stragglers overtake and join it. It was the same with the companies of pilgrims returning from the feasts in the days of Christ. Amidst the confusion of starting, children, and even grown-up people, easily get separated from their own circle; their absence being discovered only when the tents are pitched, in the quiet of the first night. That Christ did not then come back, was a sign that He had not left Jerusalem; but how striking to His mother must His answer to her have been, on her finding Him in a school of the rabbis, on the third day—"How is it that ye sought Me? Wist ye not that I must be in My Father's house?"[1]

Back again in Nazareth, with his store of strange and fruitful memories, his absolutely healthy nature, unspoiled by praise from the great Jerusalem rabbis, contented with the humble details of a laborious life, and observance of the duties of His age, at home or amidst neighbours, it was inevitable that He should advance in wisdom, and in favour with God and man. Reverence, awful yet tender, to His Father above, whose house had been His natural haunt, could not fail to teach Him due reverence to those under whose care His infancy and early years had

[1] Luke ii. 48 (R. V.).

passed ; nor can we doubt that the loving care of Mary and Joseph had fitted him to be in all respects a pattern son, instinctively subject to those set over him ; for loving and humble obedience to parents is the tap-root of religion in a child.

CHAPTER VI.

JUDÆA IN THE GOSPELS.

When Joseph and Mary returned with the young Jesus from Egypt, the worst of Herod's sons, Archelaus, ruled in Judæa, which, with Samaria to the north, Idumæa to the south, and the great towns Cæsarea, Samaria, Joppa, and Jerusalem, had become his share of his late father's kingdom. Yet he was not allowed by his Roman master, Augustus, to call himself "king,"—but only "Ethnarch," "ruler of a nation," with the prospect of being made a "king," if his conduct justified the elevation. Ten years of misgovernment, however, shewed him to be so inveterately unfit for his position, even by the low standard of Roman provincial administration, that the emperor finally banished him for life, in A.D. 6, when Christ was about ten years old, to Vienna, a town on the east bank of the Rhone, in France, a few miles south of the present Lyons.[1]

On his banishment, the territory of Archelaus was put under direct Roman control, as part of the province of Syria, under a procurator, or lieutenant-governor, of knightly rank. This change seriously altered the position of Judæa, for Herod the Great and his sons, however friendly with Rome, had yet, as a rule, enough sympathy with the peculiar ideas of the Jew, as not willingly to out-

[1] For a full account of Archelaus, see Geikie's "Life of Christ."

rage his sensibilities, by disturbing any of his religious prejudices or customs; acting with a prudent foresight and self-restraint in all matters likely to do so. The Romans, on the other hand, neither knew nor cared for Jewish idiosyncrasies. The religious opinions of the Pharisees, and the multiplicity of rabbinical rules, which covered all daily life as with a net, were quite unknown to them, nor had they a thought that a whole race would offer the bitterest resistance, even to death and national annihilation, in defence of things merely formal and apparently insignificant. The Jews, however, saw in the simplest measures of government, as, for instance, in the census taken soon after the assumption of direct local control by the Romans, an attack on the most sacred rights of the nation, and came, day by day, more and more to the conviction, that this change, which they had themselves demanded after Herod's death, was incompatible with the rights of the theocracy. Hence, even if there had been a wish on both sides for friendly relations, difficulties and hostility were inevitable. But such good-will was often wanting, and always half-hearted. The supreme authorities, indeed, were ready, except in the time of Caligula, to make concessions, and exercise forbearance, often to a surprising extent; but their best intentions were always neutralized by want of judgment on the part of the procurators, and too often by their gross violations of justice. These officials of comparatively lower rank, were, above all things, filled with high notions of their power, and by straining it, gradually intensified the already excited fanaticism of the nation to such a pitch, that it rushed, in wild despair, into the last suicidal uprising against Rome.

Great provinces, like Syria, were put under governors

who had been consuls, and thus were of the highest rank; the smaller ones, under men who had been prætors, a name given to both civil and military dignitaries, but especially to the supreme judge, in Rome. A few of such minor appointments, however, were assigned to governors of the rank of knights, a much lower class in the state; those they received being only such as could not be placed completely under the Roman law, on account of local barbarism or stubborn devotion to native usages. Of these, Egypt is the best-known example, but there were other places with a population still half barbarous, according to Roman ideas, which were governed in the same spirit of compromise.

The legal title of the Roman governor of Judæa was "a procurator," that is, one who took charge of anything—in this case, of the revenue of a province—for another, the governor-general. The name is used in a general way for all imperial fiscal officials, a knight being appointed to the office in Judæa because a military command was connected with the post; to secure subordination to the higher military authority of the governor of the great province of "Syria," to which Judæa belonged. Ultimately, under Claudius, men saw the strange spectacle of a freed slave, Felix,[1] being raised to the lieutenant-governorship. Though nominally under Syria, the procurators of Judæa were, however, practically independent, having a separate military command and power of jurisdiction, subject to no interference on the part of their titular superiors, unless special and serious causes, such as insurrection, demanded action. Their residence, or prætorium, was not at Jerusalem, but at Cæsarea, where the palace, built by Herod, seems to

[1] Acts xxiii. 26.

have been occupied by them.[1] On special occasions, but especially at the high Jewish feasts, when many precautions were necessary, on account of the myriads of Jews streaming towards the Holy City, the procurator went to Jerusalem, where he took up his abode in the great palace of Herod. Hence, the prætorium at which Pilate was living, when Christ was brought before him, must have been that palace, which, as I have said, was on the high ground at the west border of the town,[2] and was, in fact, not only a palace, but also a very strong fortress, in which, during the rising at Herod's death, large bodies of troops were collected; defence against the populace being easy behind its walls and great forts. It is probable, therefore, that the troops attending the procurator while he was in the city, were also massed here; the ordinary garrison being left in Antonia. The Roman army consisted of two strictly and widely distinct classes, the legions and the auxiliary troops; the former made up only of Roman "citizens," for provincials admitted into the legions received "citizenship." The auxiliary troops, on the other hand, were composed of provincials, who, in Christ's time, as a rule, were not citizens. Their arms were lighter and somewhat simpler than those of the legions; national peculiarities in this respect being often retained. Their infantry were divided into cohorts of from 500 to 1,000 men; the cavalry, into *alæ*, or squadrons, also of varying strength: both horse and foot bearing the names of the race from among whom they were raised. In Judæa, till the time of Vespasian, there were only auxiliary troops, which, as a rule, had been raised in the country, but the honour and burden of this military service fell

[1] Acts xxiii. 35. [2] *Richthaus*, Riehm and Winer.

exclusively on the non-Jewish population ; Jews not being required to enter the army. It seems probable that the regiments recruited in the district of Samaria, and thence called the Sebasteni, from Sebaste, the name of Samaria under Herod, formed the bulk of the force in Judæa, in Christ's early life. They had fought bravely in the struggles after the death of Herod, and were retained under Archelaus, from whom, it is hardly doubtful, they were taken over, when the Romans, at his deposition, assumed direct control in his place ; their strength amounting, apparently, horse and foot, to about 3,000 men ; all infantry, except one cavalry *ala*. In Jerusalem, as a rule, there was only one cohort, but there were, at least from time to time, detachments at Jericho, and, across the Dead Sea, at Machaerus, where John the Baptist was confined, while Samaria had posts in many places ; the people feeling kindly to regiments bearing the name of their district.[1] The barracks at Jerusalem were, as I have said, the fortress Antonia, on the north-west corner of the Temple area, with its two flights of steps leading down to the sacred grounds.[2] It was from the top of one of these that Paul addressed the people, when dragged thither by the soldiers, to save him from the fanatical mob.[3] The great Temple space was, therefore, always watched by the fortress, and, indeed, sentries and small piquets were distributed, at different points, in the various "porches," during the feasts, as Turkish soldiers now stand on guard in the Church and Cave of the Nativity, at Bethlehem, and in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem.[4] It would appear, also, from the escort sent with St. Paul to Cæsarea, that a

[1] *Bell. Jud.*, ii. 18, 6 ; iii. 7, 32. [2] *Bell. Jud.*, v. 5, 8.
[3] Acts xxi. 31–40. [4] *Bell. Jud.*, ii. 12, 1 ; v. 5, 8. *Ant.*, xx. 5, 3 ; 8, 11.

detachment of cavalry lay in Antonia, in addition to the infantry, and, indeed, it is even now the barrack of the Turkish horse. But, besides the troops of the standing army, the procurator could raise a special levy for temporary emergencies, which was sometimes done.

In addition to his military power, the procurator was the supreme legal officer of the province; but he seldom acted on this authority, as the Hebrew laws, both civil and criminal, were allowed to remain in force, and left to be administered by the Jewish courts. The power of life and death, however, was retained by the procurator, but only provincials who were not Roman citizens could be arbitrarily executed, so that it was justly regarded as a gross outrage, when Florus, in A.D. 66, crucified some Jews in Jerusalem, who were Roman knights.[1] Yet even provincials could be sent to Rome, to be tried before the imperial courts there, in cases of exceptional difficulty. The pardon of criminals, as in the instance of Barabbas, must have been grounded on a special rescript of the emperor, for procurators did not, in themselves, possess such a right. They had to decide personally in all cases, but often associated others with them; in part, the higher officials in their suite; in part, young men of position, who accompanied them to their province, for political training, like our secretaries of embassies. These assistants aided him, not only in general business, but formed the "Council," with which we find Festus conferring, before giving his judgment respecting St. Paul.[2]

The execution of condemned prisoners was usually carried out by soldiers, as we see at the Crucifixion.

But a third function of procurators, and the chief one,

[1] *Bell. Jud.*, ii. 14, 9. [2] Acts xxv. 12.

was, as the title implied, the superintendence of the provincial revenue. In the case of Judæa, as strictly an imperial province, the taxes were directly paid to the Cæsar, which was not done in provinces under the Senate, except in a limited measure. We can thus understand how the question was naturally raised by the Jews, whether they should pay tribute to Cæsar, which they literally did.[1]

Judæa was apparently divided into eleven fiscal districts; Jews being, in many cases, used as the "publicans" or official collectors; the abhorrence of these officials, apart from personal demerits, being aggravated by the taxes being so heavy, that Tacitus tells us the provinces of Syria and Judæa, oppressed by their burden, clamoured, in A.D. 13, that is, when Christ was about seventeen years old, for their being lightened.[2] There were two direct taxes—one on all produce of the soil, levied partly in money, partly in kind; the other—in addition to a poll-tax levied in a uniform sum, from rich and poor, women and slaves, only children and the aged being excepted—included also an income-tax.[3] There were also excise or custom dues, levied on all goods in transport from place to place. But, indeed, the Jews had paid "toll, tribute, and customs" ever since the Persian time,[4] and many towns or localities had, besides, power to raise local "customs," like the octroi in France, for their own use, though Roman citizens were exempted from them. The "customs" raised in Capernaum, on the frontier of "Galilee,"[5] of which St. Matthew was a collector, were doubtless of this kind—for the treasury of Herod Antipas, not of the emperor. The "customs" raised in Judæa in those days were, however, for the

[1] Matt. xxii. 17; Mark xii. 14; Luke xx. 22.
[2] Tac., *Annal.*, ii. 42. [3] Schürer, i. 429. [4] Ezra iv. 13, 20; vii. 24.
[5] Matt. ix. 9; Mark ii. 14; Luke v. 27.

imperial exchequer, of which Zaccheus was a "chief publican" at Jericho, on the east boundary of the district.[1] There was also a market-tax, at least in Jerusalem.[2] The customs were farmed out, as they used to be in France, and still are in Turkey; tenders being accepted for them. When thus bought, the districts acquired were sublet to intermediaries who, each in his own bounds, had to make a profit, so that the temptation to oppression was very great. As, moreover, the great tax-farmers were very often corporations which included the judges, it was hopeless to seek redress before any court, and thus the country had to endure the tyranny as it best could, repaying it by deadly hate—the only means of retaliation. Not only in the New Testament, but also in rabbinical literature, "publicans and sinners" mean practically the same; their unpopularity being heightened by the fact that a large number of these "customs" collectors were Jews. Yet, on the other hand, we must not forget that to defraud the revenue is a favorite exercise of ingenuity with many, even now, and, no doubt, it was equally so in the time of our Lord.

Within the limits defined by these Roman institutions, the Jewish people still enjoyed a large share of internal freedom and self-government. They had to take an oath of fidelity at the accession of an emperor, but this was regarded rather as establishing a friendly alliance than implying their being subjects. The internal constitution was, really, an aristocracy, of which the high-priests were the head;[3] the procurator being, in effect, only the nominal chief, while the aristocratic Sanhedrim exercised the actual

[1] Luke xix. 1, 2.
[2] Jos., *Ant.*, xx. 10.
[3] Jos., *Ant.*, xvii. 8, 4; xviii. 4, 3.

power. The High Priest was the chairman of this senate, but he could be deposed at any time, and replaced by a successor, at the pleasure of the procurator, though always from a limited number of families, of supreme priestly rank. The Sanhedrim exercised wide legislative and executive power, but the procurator might interfere at any moment, and take over a matter for his own decision; nor did their power extend over Roman citizens, but only over provincials. Jewish courts, however, as a rule, decided all civil causes by Jewish law, and also all criminal cases, except that the confirmation of death sentences by the procurator was required, before they could be carried out. But even in capital charges, he might decide, if he chose, according to the finding of the Jewish law, as is shown in the condemnation of our Lord.[1] The Jewish law, moreover, that no heathen should enter the inner fore-court of the Temple, was recognized by the Romans, every one who did so being liable to death, even if he were a Roman citizen.

The Jewish worship was not only tolerated, but stood under the imperial protection, and this extended to synagogues also, and to the holy books. A soldier, for example, who had deliberately torn a roll of the Law, was put to death.[2] The broad charity towards nearly all foreign religions, then fashionable, even led illustrious Romans to present costly gifts to the Temple; Augustus and his empress, and Marcus Agrippa, among others, enriching it with splendid offerings. The sanctuary itself, indeed, and its vast revenues, were more or less under Roman surveillance, but the only limitation on absolute religious liberty was the very trifling one, which, nevertheless, was thought

[1] Jos., *Bell. Jud.*, vi. 2, 4. [2] Jos., *Ant.*, xx. 5, 4; *Bell. Jud.*, ii. 12, 2.

oppressive by the Jews—that the official robes of the High Priest were kept in the fortress Antonia, under charge of the Roman commandant, and given out only four times a year, on the three great feasts and the day of atonement. But even this trifle was yielded, in A.D. 44, to Jewish clamour.

The greatest consideration was shown, from policy, to the peculiar religious opinions of a people so stubbornly intractable, and ready to make a vital principle of resistance to the most trifling innovation on their frozen conservatism. In all other parts of the empire, religious homage to the emperor was zealously enforced, as a test of loyalty; but though great importance was attached to it, on this account, by each successive Cæsar, it was never attempted to be imposed on the Jews, except by the madman Caligula. It was reckoned enough that two lambs and an ox were offered twice a day, in the Temple, "for Cæsar and the Roman people;" whether at the cost of the emperor or of the sanctuary is uncertain.[1] On extraordinary occasions, moreover, the Jewish authorities expressed their loyalty by great special sacrifices for the emperor. It is not known whether prayer was offered for him in the synagogues in Palestine, but it was a feature in the worship of foreign Jewish communities. Next to the worship of the Cæsar, his effigy on the coins and military standards was abhorrent to the Jew, and, on this ground, care was taken not to offend their prejudices on these points. It was impossible, however, to avoid the circulation of Roman denarii in Judæa, bearing the imperial "image and superscription,"[2] for no gold or silver money was coined in Palestine. But on the

[1] Philo, *Legat. ad Caium*, §§ 23 and 40. Jos., *Bell. Jud.*, ii. 10, 7. *Cont. Ap.*, ii. 6.
[2] Matt. xxii. 20; Mark xii. 16; Luke xx. 24.

locally coined copper money, only the name of the Cæsar and innocent emblems were to be seen, as in the time of Herod. The troops, when they came to the Holy City, left the obnoxious standards at Cæsarea; a concession to Jewish ideas, the arbitrary and foolish violation of which by Pilate, on one occasion, caused such an uproar that the hateful banners had to be taken back to headquarters, much to the mortification of the procurator. Nor could the Jews complain of any want of respect for their peculiarities, on the part of the highest Roman authorities, in other respects, though, in practice, the regulations in their favour were not always honoured by the average imperial official or his subordinates. Those who came in contact with a people so irritating from their pride, their stubbornness, and their generally low civilization, were little disposed to carry out the delicate subserviencies ordered by government. The social characteristics of the ordinary Jewish population, at the time of Christ, are not told us by any contemporary, but a people could not be very inviting of whom such a man as Marcus Aurelius felt himself constrained to say, about a century and a half later, "O Marcomanni, O Quadi, O Sarmatii, I have found a people, at last, who are lower than you!"[1] Yet these were the rude and barbarous tribes in the wild regions beyond the Danube! The worst of all was, that, before the catastrophe of the nation, it had more than one procurator who had no moral principle whatever, or any sense of right and wrong in his public action. From the beginning of direct Roman control, moreover, even when they were more considerately treated as to their feelings and prejudices, it seemed to the Jew an outrage on the Divine rights

[1] Amm. Marcell., xxiii. 2.

of the chosen people, that they, who were destined as such to rule the world, and crush the heathen, everywhere, in the dust, should have to pay any tribute at all to Cæsar, at Rome.

This feeling breaks out from time to time, even in the story of the Gospels, but it flamed up into wild revolt about the time when Christ first visited Jerusalem, and when quenched in blood, smouldered under the ashes, till at last it burst out in the fierce conflagration of fanatical despair, which ended in the destruction of the city and state. The duty imposed on the legate, Quirinius, in A.D. 6 or 7, when Coponius, the first procurator, came to Judæa, of taking a census of the population, to regulate the taxes henceforth payable to Rome, excited the fiercest opposition. A universal rebellion, indeed, would have followed, but for the efforts of the High Priest of the day to calm the infuriated masses, who finally submitted, in sullen resignation, to the registration demanded. It was, however, no lasting peace, but only a temporary armed truce, for Judas of Gamala, in Gaulonitis, called Judas of Galilee, in union with a Pharisee named Sadduk, stirred up a terrible revolt against what they regarded as so great an insult to the people of God, and kindled a religious war which, though in the end stamped out in blood, covered the land with fire and slaughter. Yet it was not without lasting results, fatal in the end; for, from this time, there rose among the Pharisees a party still more fanatical than their brethren, known among themselves and to others as the "Zealots," of whom one, Simon, strangely cast in his lot with Christ and became an apostle.[1] While others were contented to wait for the fulfilment of their political visions of the revelation

[1] Luke vi. 15; Acts i. 13.

and triumph of the Messiah, till God brought it about in His providence, these extremists sought to grasp the sword at once, and begin forthwith the struggle with their heathen rulers. To them it was due that the fire of insurrection was never, from this time, extinguished, till, sixty years later, it finally leaped up into the flames in which the nation perished.[1]

[1] Jos., *Ant.*, xviii. 1, 1. *Bell. Jud.*, ii. 8, 1. Acts v. 37.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FIRST APOSTLES.

HAVING returned from His forty days' sojourn in that terrible region from which the Baptist had come forth to rouse the sleeping conscience of the nation, Jesus made His way to the new scene of John's ministry, apparently near the ford below Bethshean, or possibly at the rushing brooks of Aenon. Whichever it was, He there obtained His earliest followers, though He had not as yet begun His public work. It was not, therefore, by His discourse or by His miracles that they were led to Him, nor solely from His being pointed out to them by John as "the Lamb of God," but rather from the instinctive feeling, that this great name was rightly applied to one whose whole air, look, and bearing were so distinctively gracious. Yet such words must have had a fulness of meaning to Jews of that age which they do not at once suggest to later times. Accustomed to the daily sacrifices of the Temple, when the lamb offered was held to have been so in the stead of Israel at large, they would imply that our Lord was in some mysterious way marked out by God, as, in a still grander sense than the victims on the altar, His Lamb, to make peace between earth and heaven. They may, indeed, have reminded the hearers of the language of Isaiah, from which the expression was evidently derived,

"He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter;" [1] while the additional comment, "which taketh (or beareth) away the sin of the world," was exactly what Jews would themselves have said of the lambs, offered morning and evening at the Temple, for the sins of their nation. That the two whose attention was thus directed to Him a second time, should have followed Him, thus implies that, in at least a cloudy, imperfect way, they saw in Him the future Saviour of their race from the consequences of its shortcomings before God. Yet their inability, and that of the other Apostles, even after the teaching of years by Christ Himself, to realize in Him anything more than a political Messiah, shows that their thoughts were, at best, confused and dark. They could not, indeed, to the very last, conceive of a suffering Messiah, and even resented our Lord's intimations of His having to endure a violent death.[2]

The two who heard the Baptist speak were the future apostles John and Andrew, both members of the fishing population on the west side of the Lake of Galilee, and each having a brother, who, by their influence, joined Christ with them—the one James, and the other named Peter by Christ, though till that time he had been known as Simon. They evidently had been admitted by John to the intimacy of immediate friendship, and formed members of the inner circle of his disciples, with whom, apparently, Jesus associated after His return from the wilderness; and hence the Baptist, though directing their attention to Him, did not hint at their leaving himself and becoming His followers, for he and our Lord, for a length of time, worked side by side, though in different localities, in separate but allied ministrations. Christ,

[1] Isa. liii. 7. [2] Matt. xvi. 22; xvii. 23; Mark viii. 32.

indeed, delayed for months proclaiming His personal claims in their fulness, and devoted Himself to the preparation of the people for His kingdom,[1] till John was silenced by his fatal arrest and imprisonment. The first preaching of Jesus, like that of John, is summed up by St. Matthew as having had for its burden the simple call to "Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,"[2] or in other words, "the Messiah is about to appear." How long this concurrent public work of Christ and the Baptist continued is uncertain, but it lasted long enough for germs of separation to show themselves through the difference in the teaching and practice of the two;[3] a difference so marked as to lead John to send from his prison asking whether Jesus was really the Messiah or only His forerunner,[4] and at a subsequent time to cause some of his disciples to come to our Lord, asking why they and the Pharisees fasted often and "made prayers," while His disciples did not, but "ate and drank."[5] So pronounced and permanent, indeed, were the contrasts between the modes of thought of the two, that a body of disciples, known as those of John, remained distinct from the followers of Christ long after the Crucifixion,[6] though they were gradually absorbed into the churches so largely as to have left no reliable traces of separation after the Apostolic age.

Such were the surroundings amidst which the four Apostles who first joined Christ had lived, while under the influence of the Baptist. Like all the prophets too, as I have already said, John expected a sudden and glorious political restoration of the Jewish state, accompanied by a

[1] John iii. 22–36.
[2] Matt. iv. 17 compared with Matt. iii. 2.
[3] Matt. ix. 14; Luke xi. 1.
[4] Matt. xi. 2.
[5] Matt. ix. 14; Mark ii. 18; Luke v. 33.
[6] Acts xix. 3.

proclamation of acceptance on the one hand and judgment on the other, to the friends and foes of its anointed Restorer, known to the Jews as "The Messiah." Hence, the less Jesus appeared likely to realize this, and the farther His gentle and lowly bearing seemed opposed to it, the more troubled must the mind of the Baptist have been respecting Him, especially when the great confessor, lying in the dungeons of Machærus, wondered at the long delay in the coming of "the day of the Lord." Yet with this training, and the strong bias towards hereditary forms and modes of thought, inevitably caught from their highly honoured teacher the Baptist, and so fundamentally opposed to the modes of thought and ideas of Christ, our Lord's ascendency over His first apostles was, from the first, so complete, that they at once left John, and attached themselves to the Man of Nazareth. In John, devoted to the Judaism of his fathers, and dreaming that he could pour into its old forms the new wine of his own fervent moral earnestness, that earnestness was well-nigh all that was common to him and Christ. The new Faith made light of form and venerable tradition, treated the precepts of the rabbis, which were sacred to His herald, with frank indifference, and substituted for them all, the homage of the soul. Such new ideas of worship supplied the "new skins," required for the "new wine" of His teaching. Yet in spite of this revolutionary novelty, they forsook the familiar ceremonialism of John, to follow the strange simplicity of Christ. No wonder that it took long to enable them fully to comprehend the ideas of their new master.

John and James were the two sons of Zebedee, one of the fisherfolk on the Lake of Galilee. Their mother's name was Salome, so that, if it be she to whom John refers

as the sister of the Blessed Virgin,[1] he must have been a cousin of our Saviour. He and his brother worked with their father, in his calling, which had so prospered with them that they employed hired men to help them, though this does not imply very much, as only one boat is mentioned, and there were four men in that on which I sailed on the lake. If Zebedee's boat was like that, it would be about six or seven tons burden, and may have had a crew of perhaps six, which would require three hands besides the father and his two sons, at a daily wage, we may suppose, much the same as that of the labourers in the vineyard, who toiled all day for a denarius, or about eightpence half-penny of English money. The invitation of Christ to James and John, while still at the Jordan, in the train of the Baptist, decided their becoming His disciples, and following Him to Cana of Galilee ; but they were evidently left free to return to their old mode of life, and did so, till our Lord, at a later time, needed them. Then, when no longer able to teach in the local synagogues, and about to retire before the hostility of the Scribes and Pharisees, and begin the itinerant labours needed for the wider spread of His "new doctrine," He summoned them again, finally, from their boat and net, to be no longer simply disciples, but apostles, or "missioners," as we might call them, to carry through the length and breadth of the country the good news of "the kingdom" of the Messiah, now, at last, proclaimed. Few notices of John's relations to Christ are given in any detail, for, even in his own Gospel, he never names himself, but those we have, give much insight to his character. He and James must originally have had their full share of Galilean excitability and warmth of temper,

[1] John xix. 25.

to have earned the name from their Master, of "Sons of Thunder,"[1] given them on their being chosen as apostles; and it is quite in keeping with it to find them, soon after, invoking fire from heaven, on a Samaritan village which had refused hospitality to their Master, and to hear of John, in his zeal for Him, taking it upon him to rebuke one who was casting out devils in Christ's name, although "he followed not us."[2] Nor was a selfish ambition wanting either in him or his brother, for we find them coming privately to our Lord, and asking Him, perhaps as His connections, that they might receive the places of highest honour, at His right hand and His left, in the great world-kingdom which they believed He was about to set up forthwith:[3] an unworthy proposal, ending only in holding out to them no more than future sufferings and shame. The two brothers, however, had, with Simon Peter, the special honour of being admitted to the greatest intimacy with our Lord, and enjoying His closest confidence. John, especially, had qualities which so won the affection of Christ, that he could speak of himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved," and was supremely honoured by "lying on His breast" at the Last Supper. That he, alone, of the Apostles, stood by the Cross with the women, shews that love had begotten love, nor is it other than might have been expected, that one thus faithful to the last, should have been chosen by the dying Saviour, rather than any of His own brothers, to take care, henceforth, of His mother, now left so desolate. It is a curious illustration of the care with which the Jews kept their "tables of affinities," and of the ramifications by which Hebrew life was connected, in its highest ranks, with very humble ones, that

[1] Mark iii. 17. [2] Mark ix. 38. [3] Mark x. 37.

John speaks of himself as "known to the High Priest;" perhaps through his mother's relation, as sister of the Virgin Mary, with Elizabeth, the wife of Zacharias, who, like her husband, was of pure Aaronic descent.[1] That he was the youngest of the apostles, which the fact of his death under Trajan implies, and also, apparently, a cousin of Christ, tended, we may imagine, to the special closeness of their relations; but its supreme cause must be ascribed to a sweet lovableness in his nature, which drew them to each other. In the apostolic history, John appears, with Peter, as the foremost of the Twelve; for though he had not the bold initiative of Cephas, or his intense active energy, he had charms of a deeper kind, which raised him above his brethren. Immediately after Pentecost he and Peter stand forth as the fearless confessors of their Lord, though Peter, ever impulsive, harangued the crowd; John apparently remaining silent.[2] The Sanhedrim, before which they were brought, describe the two as "unlearned and ignorant men,"[3] but this, in the mouths of Jewish "doctors," only means that they were seen, from the discourse of Peter, to be wanting in rabbinical training—mere laymen, in fact, from whom theological learning could not be expected. Twenty years later, about A.D. 55, Peter, James, "the brother of the Lord," and John are mentioned by St. Paul as "reputed to be somewhat"—that is, as he afterwards expresses it, "to be pillars"[4] (of the Church), at his then recent visit to the Holy City. The broad catholicity of spirit which was common to the apostles, in proportion as they realized the teaching of Christ, at that time formally

[1] Ewald's "Christus," 177. John xviii. 15.
[2] Acts iv. 13.
[3] Acts iii. iv.
[4] Gal. ii. 6, 9.

extended the hand of fellowship to the great Apostle of the Gentiles, whom some Judaizers would have repudiated. This faction had associated the names of Peter and James with their narrow views, in hope that these leaders would, in consequence, oppose St. Paul, but their bigotry found no response. John, however, had never been linked with this party, and hence was, above his brethren, ready to welcome Paul, with whose mode of thought he had much sympathy. How long he remained in Jerusalem is not known, nor even whether he was there when St. Paul last visited it. At a later date, he took up his abode at Ephesus, perhaps after the destruction of the Holy City, and possibly met St. Paul there. How nobly his Christian graces ripened with the passing years, and how eminent his standing became in the Christian communities, for spiritual elevation and holiness of life, is strikingly shewn in a passage quoted from an earlier writer by Eusebius. He is not only named in this, one of the great foundations of the Church, but called "the priest wearing the petalon," that is, the golden ornament which the High Priest bore on his forehead ; meaning, perhaps, only, by this, to express vividly the high rank, for spiritual graces, held by him. Ewald, indeed, thinks it may be taken literally, from his supposed relation to a priestly family through his blood-connection with Elizabeth ; but as the petalon was the distinguishing ornament of the High Priest only, the figurative sense appears more probable. From this time we know little of him except from tradition. His banishment to the isle of Patmos, a bare brown tangle of small low hills, took place under Domitian, but we have no particulars respecting it. We read, however, of his having been taken by robbers, and discovering, in their captain, one whom he had

sought at an earlier time to win for Christ, and now finally won by his loving gentleness; of his having drunk poison given him at Rome, without suffering from it; and of his having been thrown into boiling oil, from which he came forth uninjured. There is also a story of his having found the heretic Cerinthus in a bath he had entered, and hastily retreating, lest the building should fall on such an enemy of Christ, and of his having literally fallen asleep when men thought he had died; his breath afterwards causing the earth over him, in the grave, to heave, as if it had been his bosom! The most characteristic of these traditions, however, is one which represents him as tottering into the assembly of his brother Christians—the Church—in the weakness of extreme age, and with uplifted arms, saying, faintly, "Little children, love one another." For love was the mighty inspiring passion of his nature, fed by the truest, deepest, and most tender communion of life and spirit with Christ—contemplative but also practical; rising to the highest ideal, but far from dreamings or extravagance. In such a soul, as in a clear mirror, the subtlest lines of the divine-human glory of his Master were reflected. Gentle and lowly, he is free from mere sentimentalism, and full of apostolic energy. Regarded as the spiritual High Priest in the centre of the Christian life of Western Asia Minor, he was the illustrious representative of true Christian doctrine. He is said to have lived and died single, but for this there is no real authority. In a measure inclined to Jewish ideas, when Paul met him and the others in Jerusalem, he rose to the most striking anti-Jewish catholicity of soul; such as is to be seen, perhaps, only in the great Apostle of the Gentiles. Yet in his bright and calm elevation above strife and controversy, as became the

last of the apostles, he rises high above St. Paul, interpreting as no other did the Light and Life in Christ, from the meditations of the longest, purest, and richest experience. He thus leads back Christianity to the person of Christ, revealed by him with matchless insight and luminous clearness, leaving the Church, in his Gospel and other writings, the legacy of peace, union, and progressive development, for all future time. He was, indeed, the prophet among the evangelists, and the "seer" from the mount of vision. He has thus left a far deeper impress on the Church, than any other of the apostles. Paul could say that he had "laboured more abundantly than they all," but John has set by far the deepest imprint of his personality on Christianity as a whole.

Of James, the son of Zebedee and Salome, there is little to record, apart from the notice of his great brother John, with whom he is always associated in the Gospels. The family was apparently settled in Capernaum; and in Salome, the sister of the mother of Jesus, and one of His most loving disciples,[1] had one, through whom, we may believe, the household was, from the first, disposed to accept Him as the promised Messiah. We see her following Christ to Jerusalem with other faithful women, and, jointly with them, "ministering to Him of their substance."[2] She was, also, at the foot of the cross with her sister, the Virgin Mary, and the other true hearts who would not forsake Him, and she was among those who, in the gray dawn of the first day of the week, brought "sweet spices, that they might anoint His body."[3] Yet she was not without her human side, amidst all this loving devotion, for we already

[1] John xix. 25; Mark xv. 40.
[2] Matt. xxvii. 55, 56; Luke viii. 2, 3.
[3] Mark xvi. 1.

know of her ambitious request for her sons, on Christ's last journey to the Holy City, while He was still east of the Jordan, going south to the ford at Jericho. It is easy to see, from such an incident, how the two earned the name of Sons of Thunder; for the children of such a mother, filled with her ambitions as well as graces, would naturally be inclined to vehemence and enthusiasm; shewn perhaps in stormy eloquence, but also in burning zeal, which was not always under control.[1] "Can you drink of My cup of sorrow?" asked Christ, when Salome sought their advancement, and their heady and rash spirit instantly said "they could." No wonder their haughty self-assertion, and attempt to secure priority of rank, moved their ten brother apostles with indignation,[2] and incurred the rebuke of our Lord. Yet, from this stormy beginning, the two lives shine out, in the end, clear and calm in their fervour, as we see them in their later years.

John and James, as cousins of Christ, were very probably the companions of his boyhood and youth, and may, thus, in part, have naturally gained, with Peter, his closest confidence; but though honoured by such intimate relations, James first comes into notice, individually, only when honoured, in the year 44, by being the first of the disciples of Christ to obtain the crown of martyrdom. The persecutions of the year 36, to which Stephen fell a victim, had not driven the apostles from Jerusalem, for it is certain that when St. Paul visited the city in the year 39, they were still there.

The nation was at that time in the highest excitement, to prevent the desecration of the Temple, threatened by Caligula's ordering his statue to be erected in it and receive Divine honours; so that the populace had other thoughts,

[1] Luke ix. 54. [2] Mark x. 41.

for the moment, than hunting down the small band of Christians. In the year 41, however, Caligula was murdered, and the wild fanaticism, roused by opposition to him, was free to gratify itself by turning against whatever was heretical. Among others, "the Nazarenes" now felt the weight of popular fury, which King Herod Agrippa gratified, as the slave of the Pharisees, by "putting forth his hands to afflict certain of the Church."[1] Of these, James was the first to drink of the cup of Christ's sorrows, as he had once volunteered to do. That he was put to death by the sword shews that he suffered at the hand of the civil power, for had the Sanhedrim been the executioners, they must, according to the "Law," have ordered him to be stoned. Was John thinking of him when he saw, in vision, "the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Christ?"[2]

St. James only appears at a late period in ecclesiastical tradition, in contrast to his brother, who is surrounded by tender legends from the earliest times. But when the various national Churches began to boast of having each an apostle as its founder, Spain appropriated St. James, setting aside St. Paul, who was claimed by Rome, but had originally been the patron of Spain. The tradition that James preached in the Peninsula reaches back to the seventh century, but in the century following, when war with the Saracens broke out, the belief that, as St. Iago, he was the patron-saint of the nation, was so firmly established, that the Christian army is said to have seen him, once and again, descend from heaven in shining armour, to drive before him the cavalry of the Moors and Berbers.[3]

[1] Acts xii. 1. [2] Rev. vi. 8-10; xx. 4.
[3] Acta Sanct. Julii, Antwerpen, 1719-1731, vi. 36.

The belief that the grave of the apostle must be somewhere in the land naturally followed, and, at last, in A.D. 829, Alphonso the Chaste announced that the sacred body had been discovered by the Bishop of Iria, near that town. A light had been seen by night glowing in a thicket, and, on digging where it appeared, a skeleton was found, which was proved by its miraculous powers to be that of St. James. A cathedral was forthwith begun over the grave; the episcopal seat was removed to it; and as St. Iago de Compostella, Iria became, after Rome, the most famous place of pilgrimage in Christendom. But of course the historical value of such legends is simply nothing.

CHAPTER VIII.

ST. ANDREW AND ST. PETER.

St. Andrew, son of Jonas, and brother of St. Peter, shews in his name, which is Greek, meaning the manly or strong, how different the times of Christ were from the old Hebrew ages, when the Holy Land was exclusively Jewish. Greek names were now common among Jews; so widely had Greek influence permeated the country, through the Syro-Greek dynasty at Antioch. The family of Andrew had lived originally at Bethsaida, on the shore of the Lake of Galilee, apparently beside the sweet recess known in our day as Ain et Tabigah—musical with a strong clear brook, which now drives a mill, and fringed with low trees, shrubs, and water plants—about a mile north of Khan Minieh, very probably the site of Capernaum. The hills recede in low swellings, from which burst out exceptionally strong springs of salt water, an octagonal Roman reservoir, built round the chief spring, shewing that some town or village once stood near. Bethsaida means "Fish town," and, indeed, I saw a man catch some fish at the very spot; but Jonas and his household seem to have moved before the time of his son's meeting Christ, to the larger sphere of Capernaum, where we find Andrew living in the house of his married brother, Peter.[1] The circumstances of the brother appear

[1] Mark i. 29.

to have been humble, though their joint house seems to have been one of two stories, and had also a good-sized yard. It lay, as befitted a fisherman's dwelling, near the beach.[1] Andrew first saw Jesus at Bethany, on the other side of Jordan, just below Bethshean, where John was at that time baptizing, and was ready to accept Him as "The Lamb of God" when thus named by the Baptist, under whose preaching both Andrew and Peter had been kindled to a life-long religious enthusiasm. The attractions he found in Christ being too great to be monopolized in his own bosom, for joy, when it is great, seeks to communicate itself to others, he forthwith, as we know, sought and found his brother, and brought him to the new Teacher, in whom he believed he had found the "Messiah."[2] At the feeding of the five thousand he is mentioned as telling Jesus of a lad having some bread and two fishes,[3] and when our Lord was last in Jerusalem, we read of his coming, with Philip, to inform Christ that some Greeks were desirous to meet Him.[4] He is recorded, moreover, as having joined Peter and James and John in asking Jesus privately, on one of the last evenings before the Crucifixion, when the terrible judgments of God foretold by Him would break out, and what sign there would be of their approach, that His followers might take measures to escape.[5] Beyond these slight allusions, we learn nothing in the New Testament respecting him. Nor is tradition more full in any reliable memorial of this, the earliest of the disciples won by Christ. One legend speaks of him as having gone to Southern Russia, then known as Scythia, on which account he is now honoured as their apostle by the Russians. Other traditions

[1] Mark ii. 4, 13; iii. 31, 32. [2] John i. 38.
[3] John vi. 9. [4] John xii. 20–22. [5] Mark xiii. 3.

say that he laboured in Greece, and afterwards in Asia Minor, till finally, it is said, he was martyred on a cross, since known by his name, made by two beams joined at the middle like the letter X, the place of his death being Patrae in Greece, and the Roman proconsul his judge. This official, we are told, first had him scourged by seven lictors in succession, and only ordered him to be crucified when he saw that nothing would make him deny his Lord; but he was to be tied to the cross with ropes, not nailed to it, that his death might be the more lingering; which, indeed, it was, for some say two, some three, days passed before he died.[1]

Simon, his famous brother, whom he had the glory of bringing to Christ, that day when the Baptist's mysterious words about the Lamb of God led him to follow Jesus, and henceforth adopt Him as his new master, instead of John, returned to Galilee with our Lord, and the small band of disciples who had thus early gathered round Him —humble men all, and either friends or relatives one of the other. After the marriage at Cana, to which they went with Christ, they seem to have returned to their ordinary pursuits, for we find those who were fishermen busy in their calling, when finally invited by our Lord to become His apostles, which involved their giving themselves up to His service, as missioners, through the country, and finally, through the world. St. Peter appears to have been between thirty and forty when he thus wholly devoted himself to attendance on Christ, and had grown up with the advantages and disadvantages of his position. Though only a "layman," or, as our version has it, an "unlearned and ignorant man," in the eyes of the San-

[1] Cave's *Apostles*, 346. Winer, Schenkel.

hedrim at Jerusalem,[1] this only means, as already stated, that he had not been specially trained in rabbinical studies, for he was evidently well acquainted with the sacred writings of his people. To the rabbis, the letter of Scripture was merely an outward covering of heavenly treasures, which remained hidden to all unversed in the secret rules of interpretation, by which the rabbis discovered its secret meanings. But he was none the worse for his ignorance of this fanciful accomplishment. As a Galilean, he spoke, with local roughness and variations, the form of Syriac or Aramaic common to all the lower classes of his nation, and, indeed, to all orders in their ordinary life ; but his position on the Lake of Galilee, where foreigners were numerous, and the necessities of his trade with the towns along the coasts and the largely heathen communities across the lake, would make him familiar, in some degree, with the Greek in ordinary use among them. Hebrew, even in the corrupt form known to the age, was not a spoken language, except perhaps among some of the scribes and learned men, while the Bible Hebrew had been virtually a dead language even in the time of Ezra.[2] To be able to speak in several languages seems a great matter with us, but in Palestine, at this time, very humble men are not uncommon who have learned, from intercourse with other races, to speak not only their own Arabic, but also English, French, and, near such a Teutonic colony as that on the plain of Sharon, perhaps even German, while at Malta and Gibraltar or Constantinople, the number of languages spoken by some of the humblest classes is amazing. Peter could apparently speak Greek readily with the Roman officer Cornelius, but the pure and accurate style of his Epistles, equal in gram-

[1] Acts iv. 13. [2] Neh. viii. 8.

matical structure to that of the writings of St. Paul, may be due to some more highly trained amanuensis employed by him. That he was a married man, and that his wife accompanied him in his missions as an apostle, we learn from the New Testament, but it is not known whether he had children, though tradition speaks of a daughter, and adds that her mother, like Peter himself, suffered martyrdom.

The final call to the apostles was given first to Andrew and Peter, and then to James and John, on the same day. From that time, these four went with our Lord in all His journeys, eight others being afterwards added, making up The Twelve.

In such a small theatre as that in which Christ moved in Galilee, He would, doubtless, through His connections, James and John, be acquainted with the sons of Jonas, their business partners, and hence it is readily understood how our Lord gave Simon, on their first meeting at the Jordan, the Hebrew name of Cephas, instead of the very common one he bore[1]—a name repeated by Christ, with the reason of its being used, when Peter was finally chosen as an apostle, and, no longer a mere disciple, was to give up the catching of fish, and become a fisher of men.[2] It is in keeping with his whole future life that he is represented as falling on his knees, and saying to the great wonder-worker, whose disciple he had now been for months, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" Such a miracle as he had just seen shewed Christ to be more than human; and, as only a man, sinful like all others, he was alarmed lest he should suffer any evil at His hand, just as some, in old times, had been alarmed

[1] John i. 42; Mark i. 16. [2] Matt. iv. 18–22; Luke v. 1–11.

to find themselves in the presence of Jehovah or of an angel.[1]

It would seem, at first sight, as if, instead of deserving the by-name Peter—a rock—the symbol of firm unmovableness, it was precisely in this respect that the apostle was most wanting. But, apart from the question whether Jesus did not, rather, intend by this name that Peter would be the first stone in the Christian Church, and its future pillar,[2] it is not right to judge the character of the apostle mainly from his momentary denial of his Master. His story displays to the best advantage the characteristics of a Galilean. He is open, hasty, courageous, warm in his devotedness and spirit of self-sacrifice, and more a man of the heart and of action than of contemplation. In his realization of his Master's claims, and in resolute adhesion to Him, he stands before the other apostles. He is the most manfully active and the most matured among them, and hence his name of honour. Sharing with the rest the popular idea of the Messiah as a political king, he not only protests against Christ's first intimation of His approaching troubles and violent death, but, for the moment, loses his head, when the catastrophe suddenly arrives. Yet, even in the bold defiance of peril and of temptation which leads him to the High Priest's house, and brings about the denial of his Master, he shews his instinctive manliness. It is a repetition of his former dashing out of the boat and walking on the sea, to reach Christ: fearlessness and warmth of heart impel him, without reflection, to try his strength beyond its powers.

In the Gospels we find Peter not only among the three most trusted by Christ, and favoured with revelations not

[1] 1 Kings xvii. 18. [2] Matt. xvi. 18; Gal. ii. 9.

communicated to the rest,[1] but honoured by a kind of leadership, which, however, he owes, throughout, to his personal traits, not to any official dignity assigned him. There is no foundation for the assertion of any formal preëminence. The answer of Jesus to the noble confession of the apostle, "I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church," can be referred only to him, personally, as the Rock, and confirms his Master's estimate of his character; nor did the small difference between the two Greek words used, *petros* and *petra*, exist in the Aramaic which Christ spoke. But the dignity was personal, not official, and regards only his character and his glowing faith in his Lord; so that it could not be passed on, by succession, to others, as a formal office. Jesus had not realized the materialistic hopes connected by His nation with the appearance of the Messiah. The multitude had left Him, or had grown doubtful respecting Him, questioning whether, instead of the Messiah, He was not, rather, His forerunner; an Elijah, or some other of the old prophets. In the despondency of these sad weeks, it would almost seem as if our Lord questioned whether His revelation of Himself as Messiah, in the lofty spiritual sense, had not failed altogether. Could He believe that it had not recognition by at least one heart, in spite of the popular disappointment? Forthwith, it was seen that it had been understood and accepted by Peter, with a fulness of meaning which he could not have seen when Christ was first pointed out to him by the Baptist as the Messiah, a fulness possible only to a soul intensely sympathetic and reverent. Peter could witness, in opposition and contrast to the wavering or disbelief of the crowd, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of

[1] Mark v. 37; ix. 2; xiv. 33.

the living God"—that is, the Messiah,[1] and thus shewed himself the first who had a true conception, in the New Testament sense, of our Lord and His great office. He was thus, in fact, the *first Christian*, and, as such, Jesus greeted him with the name of Peter, which should henceforth mark him as the first stone in the Christian Church, and the future gatherer of the first fruits of the Messianic Kingdom. Still later, when about to leave this earth, Christ committed to him "the keys of the kingdom of heaven,"[2] which He Himself had hitherto borne; that is, He intrusted him with the interests of His Church, the figure being taken from the steward, or chamberlain, of the king's house, in Israel, who bore a key on his shoulder, as the symbol of his office to give or refuse admission to the palace. In the current way of speaking, "he could open and none could shut, and he could shut and none could open."[3] The bearing of a key, as the badge of the chamberlain's office, marked, even in modern times, the corresponding official in the court of Frederick the Great. Peter should have the honour of opening the door of the New Kingdom of God, and, on the other hand, of declaring those shut out from the Christian community who did not fulfil the conditions of membership; and this we see realized in his being the spokesman at Pentecost, and also to the first heathen convert, Cornelius. The earliest to recognize Christ as the Messiah, he was, before all others, the man to carry out His work, after his Master's departure, and superintend the rise of His kingdom.

That Christ should, besides, have told him that he

[1] The words in Ps. ii. 7, "Thou art My Son," etc., were ascribed in Christ's day to the Messiah by the Jews. See Acts xiii. 33; Heb. i. 5; v. 5.

[2] Matt. xvi. 19.

[3] Isa. xxii. 22.

would be authorized to "bind and loose," was as little the bestowment of an official power. It had nothing whatever to do with our traditional idea of priestly retention of sin, or absolution, but, as abundant illustrations shew, was simply the Jewish expression for a rabbi's intimating what was forbidden and what permitted. It thus simply gave Peter authority to sanction this, or forbid that, as becoming the Christian community or "Church," an authority conferred from his personal qualifications. The same power was, in fact, afterwards given to the whole body of the disciples, as we see in St. Matthew,[1] when they had made sufficient advancement in Christian ideas.

The circumstances of St. Peter's passing lapse, when he denied his Lord, if examined, confirm rather than disparage his especial manliness and firm loyalty, though his self-reliance for a moment betrays him. His bearing when the feet of the apostles were being washed reveals his noble character, and so also does the result of their taking two swords with them to Gethsemane, by a misunderstanding of the figurative language of Christ.[2] One is found in possession of Peter, who was ready for whatever might happen, and bravely struck out with it, never thinking of the odds against him, to defend his Master. Then, after the unresisting surrender of Christ to His captors, he, of all the apostles, risks the most for Him, by availing himself of John's help, to get admission to the High Priest's house, and press forward even to the fire of the servitors in the yard, to hear whatever he could. But there the demand to confess his Lord at the risk of his life, and

[1] Matt. xviii. 1. The disciples came to Jesus, and they are addressed throughout. See vv. 15–20.

[2] Luke xxii. 35–38.

apparently to no purpose, finds him weak; and, under the crushing and confusing assaults on him, he thrice denies his leader, as he had been told he would, for Christ knew him better than he knew himself. He might have left when he first saw his danger, but he could not desert his Lord, fancying he would not be detected again. He yearned to stand by Him to the end, and see what became of Him. Thus, in peril of a total apostasy, the sorrow of true faith and love is victorious.[1] At the word of Mary Magdalene he, first of the Twelve, ran with John to the empty grave, and he was the first apostle to whom the risen Saviour appeared.[2] His thrice repeated denial, however, could only be repaired by a threefold restoration, as shepherd of the flock of Christ; and this Jesus granted him, now utterly humbled and spiritually restored.[3] At the Sea of Galilee he was once more recognized by his Master, even after so terrible a fall, as the fittest of the Twelve for the supreme honour promised him at Cæsarea Philippi, though it was only confirmed to him with a sad intimation that it would bring him to a martyr's death. Hence after the Master's ascension, the disciples at once recognized him as their leader. It is he who proposes action to fill up the vacancy in the Twelve caused by the fall of Judas; it is his earnest address at Pentecost that brings the first great accession to the Church; and it is he who, with John as silent supporter, both by miracle and speech, represents the New Faith alike before the people and the Sanhedrim.[4] His future life, as revealed in slight glimpses in the Acts, belongs to the story of a later time, but his final martyrdom at Rome appears indisputable.

[1] Luke xxii. 31, 32.
[2] 1 Cor. xv. 5; Luke xxiv. 34.
[3] John xxi. *pass.*
[4] Acts i. iii. v.

Already, about A.D. 200, the presbyter Caius speaks of his grave as there, and Tertullian assumes as well known that Paul had died in the great city by the sword, Peter by the cross. The grave in the Vatican may thus really be his.

Of Philip, who joined Christ the day after the others had done so, we know little. He was a fellow-villager with Andrew and Peter at Bethsaida, and thus must have been familiarly known to them. We are told that it was he who brought Nathanael to Christ; that the question was put to him by our Lord, when the multitude were to be fed, as to the means of doing so; and further, that it was he who, with Andrew, at the feast, brought to Jesus the Greeks desirous to see Him. Finally, at the Last Supper, he asks Christ to shew them the Father, having as yet failed to see that God was in Christ, so that he who had seen the Son had seen the Father also.[1] Philip the evangelist, mentioned in the Acts, was another person, chosen by the Church, among others, to free the apostles from the distribution of alms and other subordinate duties,[2] but Philip the apostle is mentioned among the disciples after the Ascension and on the day of Pentecost.[3] Beyond this, we have only uncertain tradition. It is said, for example, that he had a wife and family, and that he died at Hierapolis, in Phrygia, having been associated with St. John in the care of the churches of Asia Minor. His daughters, it is said, were in due time married, virginity not having yet come to be regarded as it was at a later period.[4] It is worse than idle to dwell upon baseless legends of these founders of our faith, of whose life it has not pleased God to leave us almost any reliable details.

[1] John i. 45; vi. 7; xii. 21; xiv. 8.
[2] Acts vi. 2.
[3] Acts i. 13.
[4] Euseb., *H. E.*, iii. 30.

The greatest benefactors of our race are, for the most part, only names to us, and are often entirely unknown. The fathers of science or of the arts have left us the noble legacy of their discoveries, but, themselves, remain for ever lost to our homage. Silent oblivion has fallen on their personality; the good they accomplished alone survives; and, in the same way, the apostles, though famous in heaven, have left few memorials of themselves on earth.

Nathanael is mentioned only by St. John, as the last among the first five disciples who attached themselves to our Lord, and as the third among the seven to whom He vouchsafed His last appearance after He had risen.[1] But he is especially endeared to us by the notable testimony, so full of honour to his character, spoken by a Master who knows what is in man, that he was an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile; while the promise that he would see greater things than even his faith could anticipate, invests him with a high spiritual dignity.[2]

That Nathanael is not named in any list of the apostles led some of the Fathers, among others, Chrysostom, Augustine, and Gregory the Great, to think he could not have been one of the Twelve. Another fancies he was one of the disciples whom Christ overtook and communed with on the road to Emmaus; and still another, that he was only a private disciple, connected by friendship with Philip. In the end, however, it was assumed that he must have been one of the apostles, and a place was sought for him among them, by identifying him with one or other of the sacred band. In recent times adventurous speculation has fancied he was no other than St. Matthew, since the names of the two have, it was alleged, the same

[1] John i. 46–52; xxi. 2. [2] John i. 31.

etymological meaning, or that he was St. Matthias, whose name, also, is identical in sense with Nathanael, so that his election to the apostolate followed only after the defection of Judas. There is nothing, however, to support these ingenious dreams. It is now a very old and widely spread tradition, though later than Gregory the Great, that the "Israelite indeed" was St. Bartholomew. That he was an apostle seems implied in his being mentioned, in the opening of the Gospel story, with the first four disciples, who were all afterwards apostles, and from his being still in their company after the Resurrection. Bartholomew, moreover, is not a personal name, but means simply "the son of Tolmai," so that another name, which was properly his own, is presupposed. This apostle, it is noticed, is always mentioned in the list of the Twelve along with Philip, who had led Nathanael to Jesus. That he should have the two names in different Gospels is, besides, only in keeping with the use of Matthew and Levi for one person by different evangelists,[1] and is a peculiarity shared with St. Peter, and Judas the son of James, who was also known as Lebbæus or Thaddæus. Nothing is told in the New Testament respecting the labours of Nathanael, but Eusebius says he preached the Gospel in India, though other countries are mentioned as visited by him, especially Armenia, where, it is affirmed in some legends, he was bitterly persecuted and finally crucified. But it lessens our trust in these traditions to find that they further speak of his corpse being carried, by a miracle, to the island Lipara, the largest of the Lipari group, between Sicily and Italy, and thence to Benevento, thirty-two miles north-east of Naples, a city then in the States of the

[1] Matt. ix. 9; Mark ii. 14; Luke v. 27.

Church. From Armenia to either of these places was a long journey for a corpse, and raises thoughts of the gross relic-worship of the Middle Ages, to which the reputed possession of the body of a saint, but still more of an apostle, was not only a spiritual glory but an exhaustless source of wealth.

CHAPTER IX.

JESUS AND THE SAMARITANS.

Riding north from Shiloh towards Nablus, the ancient Shechem, you are borne by your patient, unwearying beast, at the walking pace usual in Palestine, from the want of roads or level ground, through a rich tract of fertile plain, now called El Mukhneh. It stretches in low waves of brown tilth, or of green crops, or gray common, for about nine miles north and south, and four from east to west; a round hump rising from time to time, like a boss on a shield, with the white flat-roofed walls of a hamlet gleaming out on its top from amidst olives and fig trees. On each side, the whole plain lies in a frame of low green-gray hills: those of Samaria on the west; those trending down a steep decline to the Jordan on the east; hamlets and villages dotting the long slopes, with alternations of side valleys, clumps of olives, patches of grain or green crops, and red stripes of soil, fresh from the mockery of Eastern ploughing. Suddenly, a side valley opens on the west side, varying in breadth from a furlong to half a mile, with the lofty and rough outline of great hills—Gerizim and Ebal—swelling up from its two sides, as you enter it. Jesus had come from the south by the same road; and this landscape, just as it is to-day, was round Him as He advanced. No journey in the land was richer in associations dear to Him. He could see, at one point, in the middle of the great plain,

the spot where it was believed Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron, and, himself, High Priest, had been buried; at another, the tomb of Eleazar, the son and successor of Aaron, and father of Phinehas; and, there, as He turned into the sweet side valley of Shechem, at the foot of Mount Gerizim, had stood the oak under which Abraham pitched his tent, on first entering the Holy Land, and in whose shade Jacob buried the amulets and teraphim which connected his household with idolatry, and where both Abraham and Jacob had built an altar to the God of Israel, from the loose stones still lying so thickly around. A great stone also had been set up by Joshua, "under the oak that was," thus, "by the sanctuary of God," as a witness that had "heard all the words of the Lord which He spoke:"[1] the oak and the altar being, no doubt, then famous in the story of the patriarchs. Over Christ, on His left, as He looked up the valley, rose Gerizim, the mount of blessings; while, over against it, the gray rocks of Ebal towered into the sky. Under its shadow lay the tomb of Joseph, and nearer Gerizim was the well which Jacob had dug, well-nigh two thousand years before, for "himself, his children, and his cattle." Our Lord must have come to the valley in November or December, about eight months after the Passover He had attended at Jerusalem, so that His ministry in Judæa had occupied Him at least eight months. We know this from the harvest being still four months distant, the waving of the first-fruits of the barley crop at the Temple altar, on the second day of the paschal week, fixing the date for that grain, while the wheat harvest was two or three weeks later.[2]

Jacob's well lies in the now untilled opening of the

[1] Gen. xii. 6; xxxiii. 19, 20; Josh. xxiv. 27. [2] Robinson's *Palestine*, ii. 99 ff.

Shechem valley, and is marked only by a rough and broken wall, encircling its shaft; the stones used for this, once belonging to a little church built over the sacred spot, in the early Christian centuries. Some memorials of this were discovered by the excavations of the Palestine Survey, still hidden beneath the rubbish spread, in a low slope, round the mouth. A fine brook, from some part of Gerizim, flows down the valley, close by; but as its stream belonged to the local population, Jacob prudently dug a fresh source of water-supply for himself, to avoid that fertile source of disputes in a thirsty land—the use of water claimed by others.

Climbing over the protecting wall, I found the well covered by a great stone, in the middle of which was a hole, large enough to have let the skin buckets of the women pass down, if the well were still used. It is hardly probable, however, that this stone is as old as the days of Christ. Indeed, it lay on one side till a few years ago, shewing the sides of the well cut into grooves by the ropes with which many generations had drawn water from below, and was only replaced, by the thoughtfulness of Bishop Barclay, in recent years. The shaft is 7½ feet across, and was 105 feet deep some centuries ago; its depth now, however, being only about 75 feet, from the habit of every one who visits it throwing down stones, to hear the echo when they strike the bottom. This odious practice is, moreover, of such immemorial antiquity that the 105 feet by no means shewed what the depth had been originally. Very probably, it was not less than 150 feet, in the time of the Lord, so that the Samaritan woman might well speak of the well as "deep." It has been sunk, first, through a thick bed of soil; then through soft

porous limestone, allowing the water to percolate into the shaft, so that it is filled at times to the depth of 10 or 12 feet, after the winter rains, though dry in summer, and even, occasionally, through the whole year. The sides, down to the limestone, are cased with strong masonry, but this can hardly have been needed after the rock was reached. Oriental wells have, generally, some kind of protection round them, especially those near towns; and this takes the form, in many cases, of raised steps, on which one sees the women rest their jars or sit for gossip. Very probably, some such provision guarded the well of Jacob, and afforded our Lord a seat, while the disciples went to Shechem for bread. He must have been looking south, towards the great towering mass of Gerizim, as He spoke; its first swelling roughness beginning only a few hundred yards from the well. It rises in bold outlines of bare rock, projecting terraces, and varied slopes, luxuriant with briers, brambles, and thorns, but rich also, from point to point, with olives and fig trees, or with patches of waving grain, for careful industry has everywhere seized any available space, and turned it to profit. Terrace walls shoot in longer or shorter lines, wherever footing could be had for them; the loose stones and soil near being utilized to make, by their aid, level spaces, for fruit trees or some kind of crop, and hence, verdure in all shades of green looks out from every angle, watered, naturally, by the copious springs to which the mountain owes its beauty and fertility. Mount Ebal, steep and comparatively bare, though terraced, far up, into ledges covered with plantations of the prickly pear, the fruit of which is eagerly eaten by all classes, rose behind our Lord to a somewhat greater height than its rival; but the contrast between the

richness of the one, and the comparative nakedness of the other, is still as marked as it was in the days of Joshua. That there should be this difference between them is, however, easily explained, for the layers of rock which slope down on the north side of Gerizim, that is, to the valley, have the same slope on the north side of Ebal, which carries the water away from the valley, leaving artificial irrigation as the only means of utilizing any part of the surface, except with gardens of the prickly cactus, to which moisture is not an essential.

Shechem, or, as it is now called, Nablus, lies a mile up the little valley, surrounded with green, and rejoicing in three great brooks, which flow past it, east or west, from the mountain behind. It is a poor place of low stone houses, lining narrow streets, in sweet confusion of size and position; lanes breaking off, still worse than the other thoroughfares; bazaars arched over with stone, like tunnels, and plentiful work for scavengers at every turn, notwithstanding the running water, which pours down the middle of the town. It has now a population of about 13,000, but it may have been larger in the days of our Lord.

The whole district was then Samaritan, a name now borne only by a small remnant, in Nablus, numbering in all only about 160 persons, which, however, is an increase on the past, so that they are not actually dying out. To get to their synagogue, through dark arches, narrow lanes, and forbidding slums, would have been impossible without a guide, and it is very bare and unattractive when reached. In fact, there is nothing outside to mark its character, and inside it is as wretched as an empty, comfortless room, five hundred years old, can well be. The high priest is a com-

paratively young man, tall and thin, with an oval face and good features, much more Jewish than those of many Hebrews. Indeed, this is the case with all the Samaritans; and when we remember how common marriages of Jews with foreign proselytes were, even till the time of Ezra, and no doubt have been among the race in many countries, ever since, the claim of the Jews of the present day to be of pure blood, as compared with the Samaritans, is very questionable. The weighty fact, moreover, that the Jews who remained in Babylon after the Return regarded their brethren at Jerusalem, in after generations, as very inferior in purity to themselves, is significant. Nor does there seem to be much ground for either Jew or Samaritan boasting of unmixed descent from any of the family of Jacob, when we think of the vast multitude of non-Jews who fled with the Israelites from Egypt, and were afterwards incorporated with them; not to speak of the fact that a number of the sons of Jacob were, themselves, only half Jews, with slave mothers of other blood. Strict intermarriage for centuries does not seem to have affected the remnant of the Samaritans physically, for they are well grown, and free from any visible taint or defect, though their ignorance of sanitary laws must have told on their numbers; the isolation in which they kept themselves, not only in regard to marriage but in all other ways, telling also against their increasing as they otherwise might. It was touching to see how many of the young people were more or less seriously affected in the eyes, ordinary inflammation having, in many cases, run its course till the sight of one or even of both eyes was destroyed: a hint, we may suppose, of what happens in the case of other ailments among them.

They pride themselves exceedingly, as is known, on

their rolls of the Pentateuch, of which there are three kept in a recess in the synagogue. The two more recent copies are shewn to all visitors, the high priest taking them out of their figured metal cases, and unrolling the parchment sufficiently to shew the strange old deep black Samaritan characters in which they are written. The stout wooden rods on which they are rolled up from each end have great knobs at the top and bottom, to allow the manuscripts to be kept in the two brass cylinders required to protect each. The third roll, which is the priceless treasure of the synagogue, is kept in an embossed silver case, and, like many other Samaritan copies of the Pentateuch, bears an inscription claiming its having been written by a near descendant of Aaron. The one named for this manuscript is Abishuah, the high-priestly great-grandson of the brother of Moses, who is said to have written it in the thirteenth year after the crossing of the Jordan. It is shewn to the Samaritans themselves eight times a year, when it is raised above his head by the high priest, on the Day of Atonement. The respective ages claimed for the three rolls are 750, 1,260, and 3,472 years; but these are only fancies. The oldest is said to have been written on the skins of about twenty rams, slain as thank-offerings, the characters being traced on the outer side of the leather. It is small and irregular, the lines wide apart, the ink faded and purplish, the skins much torn, quite yellow, and patched in some places, their edges, moreover, being bound with green silk. The long inscription about its origin is written with great caligraphic skill, by thickening some letters in a vertical column, on the back of the roll. Some ascribe its date to the seventh century of our era, which, though so comparatively recent, would make it much the oldest

SAMARITAN HIGH PRIEST.

(*From a photograph taken at Nablus.*)

He stands in the Samaritan Synagogue, beside the old Samaritan MS. of the Pentateuch.

Hebrew manuscript in existence. But this age is thought much too modern by others, Rosen thinking it the copy prepared for the temple built on Mount Gerizim, and even Dr. Samuel Davidson admitting its high antiquity as unquestionable.[1] Strange to say, it varies frequently from the Hebrew text, and agrees much more closely with that of the Greek version.

Among a people so unchangeable as the Samaritans, the customs of to-day may reasonably be assumed a continuation of those of the days of Christ, and thus help us to realize the ways and opinions of the woman with whom He spoke at the well, and of those whom He afterwards met. Still, as then, they like best the name of Israelites, that is, children of Jacob-Israel, of whom the woman at the well spoke as "our father." They are still earnest in the confession of the one living God, and reject all images, even requesting any picture on the wall of a room they may enter to be turned and thus hidden. Like the Jews, they do not utter the name "Jehovah." They believe in the existence of both good and evil angels and spirits, from Creation, finding the one in the words "spirit of Elohim," and the other in the "darkness" that was upon the face of the deep.[2] Angels, they say, came out of the light; but light implies smoke and darkness, and thus both angels and devils came from the light. The names of the four greatest angels are Fanuel, Anusa, Cabbala, and Nasi.[3]

[1] Major Conder, who has a genius for doubt and opposition, thinks it dates from the seventh century; but he has no authority as a scholar, throwing out his opinion only from what he thought the look of the MS. Dr. Davidson's opinion is given in Kitto's Cyclo., art. "Samaritan Pentateuch."

[2] Gen. i. 2.

[3] Fanuel is the "Penuel" of Gen. xxxii. 31. Anusa is the Hebrew word in Exod. xiv. 25, translated "Let us flee." Cabbala is translated "covered" in Num. iv. 20. Nasi is the second part of the name Jehovah-nissi (Exod. xvii. 15). On such fanciful dreams is some theology built.

The greatest of the Samaritan devils is Azazel, the word translated "scapegoat" in Deuteronomy,[1] and next to him come Belial,[2] and Jasara. Angels live in heaven, devils in hell; but both are round mankind, to lead aright or to turn astray. The descendants of Cain became evil angels with human bodies, but transferred to another world, though allowed to come back and tempt us. The "giants" before the Flood[3] were angels cast out of heaven. The high priest could not say where paradise and hell were, though he thought they were on earth. Hell, in fact, he suggested, must be in or under Jerusalem, as it is so near the Dead Sea, the water of which smells of sulphur, while paradise was, he fancied, on Gerizim, or over it. They understand by Sheol the graves in which bodies lie till the Judgment Day: our souls go forth into the air, where they float about, the good happy, the wicked wretched; but neither have any sense of the lapse of time, since they are immortal. To be gathered to our fathers, or to our people, is to go, as pure spirits, to paradise after death, there awaiting the judgment, after which we get our bodies again, and return with them to paradise. After the judgment, the wicked in hell, also, will again have the bodies in which they sinned. On that day all the dead will rise with their bodies, just as they were in life, that God may see what they were when on earth. Heaven and hell are alike eternal, but those who have done good as well as evil will be admitted to paradise after longer or shorter punishment. Yet they vary in these opinions, for they sometimes say that we shall have no bodies hereafter, and no remem-

[1] Deut. xvi. 26.

[2] Belial is the word translated "wicked" (Deut. xv. 9). Jasara seems to be from the word translated "a song" in Deut. xxxi. 21.

[3] Gen. vi. 4.

brance of the life here ; and being without bodies, will not marry, but will be simply good or bad angels.

The Samaritans expect the appearing of the Messiah when the Judgment Day has passed, basing their hope on the prophecy, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet;"[1] but they do not think He will be greater than Moses, who will, in their judgment, always remain the greatest of the prophets, for whose sake alone the world was created. The Messiah will come in the year 6000 from creation, and as this is near, He is already on earth, without knowing it. A great assembly of the wisest of all nations will be held, to establish the true religion ; and to this the Samaritans will send a deputy, who will be the Messiah. This they expect from year to year. Victorious in the discussions, He will lead them to Gerizim, where they will find the two tables of Ten Commandments, and the manna, and other memorials of the Tabernacle. All will then believe the Law, and recognize the Messiah as their king, and as the ruler of the whole world. He will convert all mankind, and make them all equal ; and then, after living a hundred and ten years on earth, He will die, and be buried under Gerizim. That He should be buried on it is impossible, for no grave can be dug on that pure and holy mountain, which, contrary to fact, they think fifteen cubits higher than Ebal, and the highest hill on earth—Mount Ararat, in fact—honoured by not being overflowed at the Deluge, and the resting-place of the ark. The earth will last a few centuries after all this, till 7,000 years from creation have been fulfilled, and then there will be what appears like a second and final judgment, ending all things.

[1] Deut. xviii. 15.

As in the days of our Lord, they receive no part of the Old Testament but the Pentateuch, which they read in their synagogue in Hebrew, but from Samaritan characters. The text of their ancient manuscript Dr. Petermann thinks as old as the separation of the Samaritans from the Jews, in the time of Nehemiah; the fact that it and the Septuagint seem to have been derived from the same old Jewish sources, combining with other reasons in leading him to this belief. Besides the precious rolls, however, there have been translations of great antiquity: a Greek one, now quite lost, for Samaritans in Egypt, and a Samaritan translation, hardly understood now by any of them. Petermann thinks these translations at least as old as the Christian era. There has also been an Arabic translation, though it is hard to imagine for whom it could have been made, unless for the general population of Palestine, who speak a corrupt form of that language. But these translations are only literary curiosities, known to very few, and seen by hardly any, for the copies of them are very rare, and are found, apparently, only in one or other of the great libraries of Europe.

I have described the Samaritan Passover in my "Hours with the Bible,"[1] so that I need not allude to it here.

Our Lord touched the Samaritan woman's heart in its tenderest depths when He told her that "this mountain," to which He, no doubt, looked or pointed as He spoke, was no more sacred than any other part of the world, or even than Mount Moriah at Jerusalem, which she held in scorn. Gerizim has, for immemorial centuries, been an object of awful sanctity to her race, and is so now to the handful still remaining. It is emphatically "holy." Over it, or

[1] Now called the *Bible by Modern Light*, ii. p. 184.

on it, as I have said, they place paradise, and all the rains that water the earth go forth from it. Adam was formed from its soil and lived here, though, said the priest, some fancied he lived at Serendib, that is, Ceylon. They still shew the place where our first parent set up his earliest altar, and also that on which Seth raised his. Gerizim, moreover, as I have also said, they regard as the Ararat of the Bible, and they still point out the spot where Noah built his altar, and where he went into the ark, seven steps being shewn by which he ascended to it, each of them consecrated by a sacrifice. The spot on which Abraham was about to offer Isaac is still known, and they can tell exactly where the ram was caught in the thicket. In the centre of the top they place Bethel, where Jacob dreamed of the ladder to heaven; a great broad stone marking the spot. Near it is the place where Joshua, according to their text, built the first altar in Canaan; and they still point out the twelve stones, no doubt well known to the woman at the well, on whose under side the law of Moses is written,[1] this being, moreover, the spot on which, at a later period, the Samaritan temple was built. There are, indeed, ten or twelve large squared stones lying about, but they are probably only the remains of a fortress built by the Emperor Justinian, though they may certainly have belonged to the temple, or possibly to a Christian monastery, erected there in early days. Examination has, however, shewn that there has never been any writing on them. Large numbers of small squared stones, seeming to have belonged to some mosaic-work, lie around. On a plateau below the highest point the ancient site of their high priest's house is shewn, and not far from it is the place still used for the

[1] Deut. xxvii. 8; Josh. viii. 32.

Passover, and other sacrificial gatherings. But the Samaritan woman would think, further, of a holy place, still lower down, a cave in which it was believed the five kings took refuge from the pursuit of Joshua.[1]

Besides the Passover, the Samaritans celebrated, and still celebrate, the feast of unleavened bread; the first and last days of it, and the "great Sabbath" which intervenes, being special festivals. It runs concurrently with the Passover, as was the Jewish usage. Each day of the feast has its special name, the great Sabbath being "the Sabbath of the Sea," because on that day Miriam's Song, and the crossing of the Red Sea, are read in turn. On this and on the other days of the festival, the oldest of the Pentateuch rolls is shewn and kissed, each of the congregation stroking it with his right hand and then passing the hand over his face.

Three days before Pentecost is the third feast—the day of Sinai—because the whole of the Law is then read. It is begun two hours before midnight, and the reading does not end till the next sunset; but it is permitted to leave the synagogue during these hours, to eat and drink, and lights may be kindled, and cooking done. Pentecost begins on the fiftieth day from the great Sabbath of the feast of Unleavened Bread, and constitutes the feast of the early harvest. As on that of Unleavened Bread, Gerizim is ascended in a formal procession, the whole of the Law is read, and the holy places are visited. They also hold the feast of Trumpets, on the first day of Tizri, nearly our September, the Ten Commandments being read on it, and the oldest Pentateuch again shewn. On the Day of Atonement no one can eat, drink, sleep, or speak, from the one sunset

[1] Josh. x. 17.

to the next; and they must spend the whole twenty-four hours in the synagogue. The oldest Pentateuch is shewn, on this day alone, at the very opening of the service. Two books of Moses are read through the night, and the other three during the following day; the finest of the Samaritan hymns being sung at intervals. At the feast of Tabernacles, booths or huts, or bowers, as we may please to call them, are raised. Every Samaritan father ornaments his room with boughs of palms, pomegranates, lemon, orange, and some kinds of grass, all the branches being hung from the ceiling, and in this room the family live for a week, removing the decorations on the eighth day. The Jews, on the other hand, never make their booths inside a room, but always in the open air, or, in the east, on the flat roof.[1] The feast begins in the morning, with some Bible verses, a triple prostration, and a prayer, which the high priest has previously recited inside the veil, in imitation of the original high priests, who, they assert, never allowed themselves to be seen by the people; their living close to the temple helping them in this invisibility. Three hours before sunset they reassemble, pray, read the Law, and finally close the services by a procession to Gerizim.

The worship of ordinary Sabbaths is the same as that of the Jews; fixed lessons are recited, the whole Law being gone through in the year. Their civil year begins with Nisan—part of our March and April. Half yearly, there is a "day of the heave offering," but it is really the occasion on which the priest receives, from every member of the congregation who is over twenty, an offering for his personal support, of half a shekel, or three piastres; say eightpence. This, however, brings him only about 160 or 200

[1] Neh. viii. 15, 16.

piastres a year in all, his additional income rising from the tithes, which every family pay yearly to him on all their earnings. They amount, it is said, to about 1,200 piastres, from which he gives 200 to the poor. Official acts, such as circumcision, marriages, divorces, and burials, bring him a trifle more, so that he receives, in all, at most, about twenty pounds a year!

They have only one priest, who is, necessarily, their high priest, his successor being chosen by him from the Levitical stem, even against the will of the people, if he so please: the only limitation being, that the intended priest be twenty-five years of age, and that his hair has never been touched, to cut it, since his birth. He is appointed by the priest for the time laying hands on his head before the congregation, at the close of prayer on the Sabbath, in the synagogue, and giving and putting on him a white surplice, prepared, it may be, by the people. Those present then kiss his hand, and the ordination is over. Visits to his house are now paid, to congratulate him, and the day is kept as a festivity. No sacrifices are offered as among the Jews in Bible times. Henceforth, he may bear a roll of the Law, but he can only lead worship when the old priest is not present. In their dress they are not different, either out of the synagogue or in it, from the laity; for the turban, as with all Orientals, is never taken off, so that their Nazarite abundance of hair is not visible, and the only distinction that marks the layman is that his tunic has not the same slit in the shoulders as there is in that of the priest;[1] a difference not to be noticed except when sought. The tallith, which is of so much importance among the Jews, is only used among the Samaritans in the

[1] Exod. xxviii. 32.

shape of a scarf, put over the turban by the priest, when he takes the roll of the Law out of its recess, to hold it up before the congregation. The distinguishing dress of the Samaritans is white, and so have their turbans been from the remotest times. Hence, though the Mohammedans have ordered them, at various periods, to wear red turbans, that of the high priest, when I saw him, was white. But this special dress and turban are worn only in the synagogue, or on ceremonial processions. At other times neither priest nor layman is different from other citizens of Nablus. The shoes they commonly wear are bought from Mohammedans, but on the Sabbaths, feast-days, and processions to Gerizim, they wear shoes made from the leather of the lambs killed by themselves. As they have no shoemaker among themselves, however, these also are made by a Mohammedan, but special marks are on the leather, to prevent its being changed. The laity may cut their hair, or not, as they please, but they must not trim their whiskers, in obedience to the Law.[1] Women are not allowed to shave their heads, nor to wear earrings, because the golden calf was made from such ornaments. Properly, the women should attend the synagogue as well as the men ; but as this is contrary to Mohammedan practice, the young women bow to their masters and do not go, only old women attending, in a back place set apart for them.

When a boy is born, thanks are given in the synagogue next Sunday, if it be not a feast day, and the Sabbath is made, as it were, his ; but nothing is done when a girl is born. The mother has a place set apart for her in the chamber, a low wall of stone being put up loosely to keep her from others, and she has her own dishes, etc. Nor

[1] Lev. xix. 27 ; xxi. 5.

must any one touch her during her isolation, which continues thirty-three days for a son, but sixty-six for a girl.[1] When it is ended, she must bathe, and all her clothing must be ceremonially purified. Circumcision takes place on the eighth day, even if it be a Sabbath, and it is held as a festival in the household. After the rite is finished, the priest asks the father the name, and then pronounces it over the child, as we do in baptism. Weaning, whether of a boy or girl, is also a home rejoicing, to which friends come, with presents to the baby, as at circumcision. The age of weaning, according to Eastern custom, is from two to two and a half years, and is marked by the hair of boys being for the first time shaved off. A maiden's hair is first cut when she passes into womanhood, gifts making the occasion cheerful. The Samaritans do not keep birthdays, because Pharaoh did it![2] Lads marry at fifteen or sixteen; girls at twelve or even earlier. The youth desirous of a wife goes to the father of a girl, whom he has selected without knowing or having seen her, and asks his consent. If granted, the lad brings his relations to talk over matters, and if the girl be grown up, two of them go to her, and ask if she be willing; her pleasure deciding the matter. If she wish the match, she appoints the priest, or her father, or whom she likes, to act for her, and to this representative the lad hands over ten pieces of gold, a silk dress, and two veils. If the girl be still a child, neither her consent nor that of her mother is asked. The lad next invites the witnesses, with the priest, to meet the father of the bride or her representative, and, after they have all sat down on the floor in a circle, asks the father if he agree to give him his daughter as wife, on condition of his now paying half of

[1] Lev. xii. 4, 5. [2] Gen. xl. 20.

the marriage gift. This gift amounts, in the case of a widow, to 2,500 piastres—or £26 ; of a maiden, 4,900 piastres, or about £51, but if she belong to the priestly family, of 6,100 piastres, or nearly £64. Half of one or other of these amounts the bride-elect receives, there and then, as her personal property. Then the father gives her formally to the lad, and the priest reads passages from the Law on marriage, those present answering with an Amen, and their blessing on the bridegroom. Something like this had probably taken place before the marriage feast at Cana of Galilee. But there are, now, writings to be signed, in preparation for their being read on the day of actual marriage, for what I have described is only betrothal. The date of the wedding is fixed by the lad or his father, and the holiday for it is kept up for a whole week. On the actual wedding day, which is always a Friday, some relations go, shortly before sunset, to the house of the bride, take her from it, and conduct her to the house of the bridegroom. Then, when it is dark, the young people bring the bridegroom to the bride, whom he has not seen before. This done, they leave ; to return next day. On Sabbath, after morning prayer, the relations and friends assemble, with the priest, in the bridegroom's house, and read the lesson for the day, then eat and drink, and go off to mid-day prayer in the synagogue. That over, they return to the house, and he who has the best voice takes a glass filled with wine, or raki, and sings a formal blessing on the newly wedded pair. Then follows a short service by the priest and his assistants, and next come more songs, and blessings on the priest, the Levites, the company, and all Samaritans, each emphasized by a general Amen.

Samaritans may marry Christian or Jewish girls, but

only on the condition that the brides become "Samaritans," and they may marry widows, but only those who have no daughters. No objection, however, is made to stepsons. The eldest son inherits two parts; the other sons one part each, and daughters half a part. The sons also, of course, take the name of their father, but widows usually remain unmarried, to be able the better to attend to the training of their children. The degrees within which marriage may be contracted are, necessarily, lax, in so small a community, especially since they may, if they choose, have two wives.[1] If two friends live together, and one die without a son, the other, even if he have two wives, must marry the widow; complaint being made by her to the priest if he fail to do so. A meeting being called, the priest asks the man whether he will take her, and if he decline, he may state his reasons. On his refusal, however, the woman takes off his shoe,[2] seizes his coat, shoves him out of the company, and spits before him, though in old times she spat in his face; thus keeping up exactly the directions of Deuteronomy. There are very few divorces among the Samaritans, though quite easy to be had, for a man can send away his wife if she make trouble in the house. Witnesses meet, along with the priest, in the house of the couple, and the priest writes a "bill of divorcement" in their presence, and gives it to the wife when signed by the witnesses, on which she leaves the house, after receiving the unpaid half of her marriage gift, but she forfeits this if she has been unfaithful.

Any one but the priest may bury the dead, but he cannot touch a corpse, and those who bury it are "unclean" for seven days, so that they are very willing to get Mohammedans or Christians to inter their lost ones. When one of

[1] Lev. xviii. 18. [2] Deut. xxv. 9.

the community dies, the body is at once washed, if he has expired after noon-day, that he may be buried before sunset; but no burial can take place on the Sabbath, nor is the dead one noticed in the service, for Sabbath is a day of joy! After washing the whole body, the hands are again washed thrice, the mouth, the nose, the face, the ears, and, last of all, the feet. Then water is poured over the whole corpse, and prayers are said, in alternate sentences, with the priest; then they read all the Pentateuch up to the thirty-second chapter of Deuteronomy. Meanwhile, a white cotton shroud is put on the body, and a white turban on its head, whether it be a man or a woman. When sunset approaches, and the reading must be hastened, they divide the text into portions, for each to recite together. When all is read, the corpse is lifted and borne to the grave; the rest of the appointed reading of the Law going on as they advance; men and women following together. They then lay the body in the grave, and the priest reads from the Law a piece said to have been sung by the angels after the death of Aaron, and the people answer, "Blessed be our God for ever, and praised be His name to eternity." The grave is then filled up amidst benedictions. Till the next Sabbath, the passages from the Pentateuch in which there is reference to death are read, morning and evening, at the tomb. The women and maids related to the dead sit the whole day, bewailing him, in a house set apart at the cemetery for them. After morning service next Sabbath, the congregation go to the grave, and eat there, each bringing his or her own food—and read the lessons for the day; but the relations read through the whole Pentateuch at home, and do not go to the synagogue. The angel-song is sung at the grave, and some other hymns, those present

repeating each strophe after the singer, the whole touching ceremony closing with the benediction.[1] For a year after the death, the tomb is visited by the family once a month.

The Samaritan hymns are, in themselves, a romance of history. There are two collections, the earlier of which was, they say, compiled by a devout soul who lived before the time of Jesus Christ : the later, in the 13th century. They consist of prayers and sacred songs for all times, the oldest portion being "prayers of angels"! or, rather, angelic chants, claiming to have been sung by heavenly visitants after the finishing of the Tabernacle, and after the death of Aaron, as they hovered over his corpse ; the people refusing to believe he was really dead ! They have, also, a book for the regulation of new moons and feasts, from which the high priest prepares the calendar each year. This, they believe, was put together by Adam, and handed down by tradition, till Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron, wrote it out ! Everything about these people—the survival of an immemorial past—is, indeed, old and weather-stained. Thus, at a circumcision, they pray for a Roman soldier who, though standing sentry over the high priest's house, in the long vanished ages, did not prevent him from performing the rite, and, moreover, refused money for the kindness, but asked to be remembered in their prayers ! Their temple is still in all their thoughts. It had long been thrown down by the victorious Jews, when Christ was at Jacob's well, but they still at set times repeat, on the top of Gerizim, prayers for its rebuilding. As it is not now standing, to enable those who may be defiled to purify

[1] Apart from information gathered by me on the spot, I am mainly indebted for this account of the Samaritans to the very interesting article by Dr. Petermann on them in Herzog. 1st. Auf.; and to Answers to Questions, by the Rev. C. Fallscheer, of Nablus, in *Palestine Exploration Fund Report*, 1887, 233 ff.

themselves in its courts by solemn rites, not only the high priest, but all the community, shrink from touching a corpse; a Samaritan mother, notwithstanding all her maternal affection, leaves her child when she sees it about to die; the dead being washed and prepared for the grave, as I have said, by Moslems. Samaritans are very good to the poor. Their theology, as may be expected, is often curious, and is doubtless the same now as in the days of our Lord. When asked if he thought the Law, alone, was sufficient for our salvation, the high priest replied, that the first letter of Genesis was "Beth" and the last letter of Deuteronomy, "Lamedh," or, as they pronounce them, "Ba" and "Lam." These two letters make "Bal," which means "enough"; Ba, moreover, is two, and Lam thirty, making together thirty-two, and thirty-two is the perfect number of a man's teeth! Therefore, the Pentateuch is sufficient for salvation! Some of the community are red haired, with blue eyes, but the majority have dark eyes and black hair; the same variations, in fact, as one sees among Jews at Jerusalem. Arabic is the language commonly spoken; only the priest being able to read Samaritan. The women are veiled in public, and there is no difference between the married and single. Among the men, their fine crimson turban is the distinctive mark, though the priest still wears the original white one. The women arrange their hair in ten or twelve plaits, falling down their back. The Pharisees used to wear "lovelocks," and the Phœnicians had similar side curls, or plaited their hair, and wore it often very long, as the Bedouin, in some parts, do still; and, even now, the peasant women of Samaria wear a round tire, like that of the Phœnician goddess Astarte; but the Samaritans have nothing of the

kind. The first lock of a child's hair, however, must be cut off by the priest, though the barber does the rest. The men are merchants, clerks, weavers, tailors, and carpenters; the women confine themselves to their household duties. Children are taught to read Arabic, to write, to cipher, and to sing the ancient hymns, but the community has no instrumental music.

The old Crusading Church of St. John, at Samaria,

Colonnade of Herod, Samaria.

carries us back, in its crypt, to days long before Christ. This sunken chamber is, undoubtedly, an old Hebrew tomb, and may very probably be that of the Kings of Israel. There are spaces in it for eleven bodies, and there were only thirteen kings between Omri and the fall of Samaria. An ancient stone door once closed this venerable sepulchre, its panels carved like the lids of Phœnician sarcophagi.

Besides the incident of the woman at the well, the Samaritans are several times mentioned in the Gospels. Of the ten lepers cleansed, only one returned to give glory to God, and he was a Samaritan.[1] The Good Samaritan is the ideal of large-hearted benevolence for all ages. The men of Sychar, brought to Christ by the woman, received our Lord with great cordiality, "beseeching Him to abide with them," and many of them accepted Him as "the Saviour of the world." One instance only, is given, of churlishness shewn Him by this ancient people, in the refusal of one of their villages to shew Him hospitality, "because His face was as though He were going to Jerusalem;"[2] but their bitterness was at least equalled by that of James and John, who wished that fire should be cast down on them from heaven by Christ, to consume them for their incivility. Nor are we to forget that the "Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans," and that the uttermost malignity of His enemies could find no expression more intense, than that Christ must be a Samaritan, and as such, have a devil.[3] It was this rancorous hatred of the race on the part of the Jew, in which we must find the explanation of our Lord forbidding the apostles to enter any "city of the Samaritans,"[4] for to have done so would have closed the door against them with every Jew, and have thus kept His people from even hearing of the new kingdom of God.

The relation of the Jews to the Samaritans was, indeed, always fiercely hostile; the old rivalry of Judah and Ephraim reviving in this new form. Already in the time of Zerubbabel, Samaritan overtures to help in building the Temple at Jerusalem were contemptuously rejected,[5] and

[1] Luke xvii. 16. [2] Luke ix. 53. [3] John viii. 48.
[4] Matt. x. 5. [5] Ezra iv. 1 ff.

the Son of Sirach,[1] more than three hundred years later, speaks of "the foolish people that live in Shechem," as hated even more than the Edomites and the Philistines. "There be two manner of nations," says he, "which my heart abhorreth, and the third is no nation: they that dwell in the mountains of Seir, the Philistines, and that foolish people that dwell in Shechem." Samaritan women were held in our Lord's day, by the Jews, to be always "unclean,"[2] so it was natural that the disciples should be astonished to see Him talking with one, especially as no Jewish rabbi would be seen talking with any woman in public. Nor were the Jews, in return, less furiously hated by the Samaritans. That Christ should ask water from the Samaritan woman was incomprehensible to her, as the Jews had "no dealings with Samaritans," even in such a simple act of natural charity. Yet they were never treated by the rabbis as foreigners, but rather branded as a "mixed people," the Jewish descent of whose members had not been proved, but was still possible. It was not, therefore, formally denied that they belonged to the "Congregation of Israel;" their title to do so was only treated as doubtful, while their observance of the Law was regarded as no better than hateful Sadduceeism, which rejected the authority of the Rabbis.[3]

[1] Ecclus. l. 25, 26. [2] Hamburger ii. 1,068. [3] Schürer ii. 7.

CHAPTER X.

CHRIST'S OWN COUNTRY.

CAPERNAUM being called in the Gospels our Lord's own city, and the greater part of His public as well as earlier life having been spent in a very limited district, of which the Lake of Galilee may be called the centre, it will help us greatly, in reading the Evangelists, to know the leading features of the scenes amidst which He thus moved.

From Jacob's well, Jesus, in passing north to Galilee, would take the ordinary road, or rather track, for there have never been any highways in Palestine for wheeled vehicles, except where the Romans made a narrow causeway, as a military road, from one post to another. It would lead Him past Samaria, then in all the glory of its restoration by Herod, and full of life and manifold attractions, as the headquarters of the Roman provincial soldiery. After crossing the sweet circular plain, from which the hill of Samaria rises like the boss from a shield, four hundred feet, with steeply sloping sides, He would advance through an opening in the hills enclosing it, to the uplands, and, passing Dothan, would descend to the plain of Esdraelon, by a narrow rough defile, opening on the wide level, a little north-west of En Gannim, and opposite the hills of Gilboa. Crossing, by Jezreel, on a spur of these hills, He would get to Cana, to which He was going, by any one of various tracks. From this, He appears to have

passed over the hill to Nazareth; but His reception there was so unfriendly that He presently left it and "went down to Capernaum," which from that time He made His "own city."

From Nazareth His road thither, in all probability, was the same route as that which I followed, along the plain of El Battauf, and up the slow rise of ground, slightly north-east, towards the Horns of Hattin; two crags which rise at the opposite ends of an ancient crater, 1,018 feet above the Lake of Galilee. The level space inside, once boiling lava, is enclosed by a confusion of fragments of black basalt, rising like the banks of an amphitheatre, which, perhaps, has led some to think it must have been the scene, at a later time, of the Sermon on the Mount. But the ground on which this fancy rests—that the two crags give point to the words in the Gospel, of Christ going up into *the* mountain, since no other has such distinctive marks—seems inconclusive. The hills, rising from the lake along its whole length, might have been spoken of thus at any point, in contrast to the level beach, and the object sought by our Lord, —a spot where He could have quiet, such as the thickly peopled shore could not offer, and convenience for addressing a multitude,—could be attained in many green hollows better than in the uncomfortable crater of Hattin. The view on which, in any case, He must often have looked, is inexpressibly touching in its associations, and varied in its beauty. From the neighbourhood of Hattin nearly the whole of the lake is visible. To the east are the steep bluffs of the great tableland of the Hauran, which run along the narrow beach; the "Hill of Bashan" rising in the far distance. To the north are the

volcanic cones of the Jaulan; on the north-west, a long slope rises to the hills which reach away to Safed. Our Lord would pass over the heights, near Hattin, and go down, by the "Valley of Doves," to the plain of Gennesaret, at Magdala, on its south end. This "Wady Hamâm" was even then famous; for its precipitous sides, pierced with caves far overhead, had been the stronghold of fierce bands of fanatics, who made these caves their citadels, till destroyed by Herod the Great, who let down soldiers in great cages to them from the top, and put man, woman, and child to the sword. Already, in the days of Christ, these lofty chambers in the rocks had no doubt become what they still are, the breeding-places of countless doves and pigeons, who pass out in "clouds," to pick up the seeds that fall on the beaten path, as the sower stalks onward, and to get what they can from wild growths, or from the fields. But, besides these, Wady Hamâm gives eyries and nesting-places to great numbers of eagles, vultures, hawks, and ravens, which sail from it, over the landscape, to see where a carcase has fallen, that they may gather together to the banquet, or to pick up lizards, mice, or finches. Birds of prey, and those on which they feed, are, alike, unmolested in the East, and are hence very numerous. I have, indeed, counted seventeen hawks in the air, at one time, over the Acropolis at Athens, for Greece is as safe a home for the feathered races as Palestine.

The little plain of Gennesaret, which bends in a semicircle to the foot of the soft hills, here receding in an arc from the shore, was a continuous garden, only interrupted by populous and thriving villages, in the days of Christ, though now a desolate waste. Crossing it, He would reach "Khan Minieh," in the opinion of many the site of Caper-

naum, though others give that honour to "Tel Hum," a few miles further to the north. If Tel Hum be really the site, the path on the banks overhanging the strand would bring Him to it, at the upper bend of the lake, not far from the entrance of the Jordan into it.

The Lake of Galilee, on which "His own city" lay, is shaped like a pear, stretching twelve miles north and south, while at its broadest it is eight miles across.

On the west side, on which stood Capernaum, rounded hills, with long slopes, rise, as a rule, almost from the water's edge. They are not green, like hills in England, but rather gray; Hattin being the highest among them. Here and there they retire from the water's edge, and leave more or less plain, as at Tel Hum and Gennesaret, but the only crag or cliff is a low one at Khan Minieh, at the upper end of Gennesaret. There, the limestone rock juts in a rude cape over the waters; a path cut along its face, long before Christ's day, forming then, as now, the only path northwards, so that at this point one feels that he treads ground that had often been pressed by the sacred feet. Round the head of the lake there is a swampy flat made by the Jordan, which flows through it; the miry haunt, in all ages, of big black buffaloes, with horns lying flat to their heads; the usual cattle of the peasant. Along the east side runs the tableland of the Hauran, sinking to the lake in a line of steep bluffs, worn into numerous gullies by the winter storms, and so near the waters that there is very little arable fringe or plain anywhere at their feet; a peculiarity making it impossible for towns or villages to have existed, except on the top of the cliffs. The water is beautifully clear, shewing the stones over which it ripples, with marvellous beauty. There are no trees on the hills,

though there is no such desert wildness as on the hills of the Dead Sea; but, on the other hand, there is not at any part of the level ground, on either side of the lake, anything like the rich wooded scenery of England or America. Still, the play of light and shadows on the water, the skies, and the heights, give the view a charm all its own.

In Christ's day whole fleets of boats found occupation on the lake: coasters, ferry-boats, and boats for fishing. Josephus, indeed, a generation later, collected at one time no fewer than 230. Now, however, there seems to be only the single boat in which I was rowed along the lake. Sharp at both ends, perhaps like that of Peter, or James and John, it was about six or eight tons burden, with a mast of twelve or thirteen feet, raking forwards; a rope through a pulley near the top serving to hoist a huge sail if needed. At the stern, it was decked for about five feet, and on this "upper seat" a mat was laid down for me. Was it here that Christ lay during the storm, or was He contented to sleep on the planks below? In any case He would have to bear a strong and sickening smell of fish, from the nets stowed below the little deck, and from the timbers themselves, a smell so strong that it made me quite sick. He must often have had the same glorious view as I then enjoyed. Hermon, flashing light from its unstained snows, rose high into the northern heavens; lesser mountains, gradually sinking into the modest hills along the shore, reaching like a long train of attendants from the steps of this dazzling throne. Tiberias, which is lowly enough now, was then in its first glory, with its grand palace, its castle, its barracks, its soldiery, its courtiers in silk clothing, and its high officials in their bravery, curveting through its streets, or borne in showy barges on the waters. Besides these, all on the

west side, there was the town of Tarichæa, famous for its fishing industry, great quantities of salted fish being sent from it to all parts. Its size and strength must have been very considerable, for in the generation after Christ, it was only taken by Vespasian after a vigorous effort; and so many of the inhabitants escaped in boats that a fleet had to be built, which finally defeated them, with a loss on their side of 5,000 men. There were also, besides Bethsaida and Capernaum, various places not mentioned in the Gospels, for Josephus speaks of a great number of towns and villages along the shore or near it.

The climate of the lake is very close and sultry in the hot season, the air being kept from it by hills, some of which are 1,000 feet high, and the surface of the water lying no less than 682 feet below that of the Mediterranean. Hence, all who can, leave in summer for the hills round Safed, as was, no doubt, the custom in Christ's day also, especially as then, no less than now, fevers and ague were very prevalent in the hot months, as we see in the illness of Peter's wife's mother, and of the son of the nobleman of Capernaum. Solitude now reigns everywhere along the shores and on the hills, except at the wretched Tiberias; but, in spite of drawbacks from heat or local sickness, the population 2,000 years ago was very dense, and every spot shewed the careful toil of the husbandman. Walnut-trees grew on the hills, and palms waved on the shores. Figs and grapes were said to ripen for ten months in the year, and the olives were famous. Four permanent streams supplied abundant irrigation, some ruins of the structures connected with their distribution over the soil, still remaining at Ain Tabigah, about a mile above Gennesaret. Christ could never want hearers in such a region, and they, like

Himself, being Galileans, there was no prejudice against Him from His belonging to the north, which the southern Jews regarded as rude and inferior. Nor were they so narrow and bigoted as the people of Judæa, whose fanaticism was intensified, at once by their superstitious worship of the Temple at Jerusalem, the fierce conservatism of the priestly and rabbinical headquarters, and the glowing hatred of their Roman masters, whose trumpets sounded, day by day, from Antonia, and from the great castles built by Herod, on and near the upper hill of the city.

It is strange to think that a place of which the Gospels speak as Christ's "own city," on returning to which from any temporary absence He was said to be "at home,"[1] should have vanished so utterly that its very site is a matter of question. Yet it is so with Capernaum. It is not mentioned in the Old Testament or Apocrypha, though St. Matthew applies a verse of Isaiah to Christ's coming to live in it.[2] But it must have been a place of considerable size in the days of our Lord, though Josephus mentions it only once in his account of the hard-fought wars in the district round, and then speaks of it as a "village."[3] It had indeed a synagogue, but this was always found in a Jewish community of any size; and it also boasted of a small garrison, which was commanded by a centurion, who, though a Gentile, was so well inclined to the Jewish faith that the synagogue had been raised at his expense. That there should have been none till this generous heathen gave one, shews, however, that the Jewish community, as a whole, must have been very poor, and that it could not

[1] Mark ii. 1. "At home" is the meaning of the words "in the house." See margin of R. V.

[2] Matt. iv. 13-16; Isa. ix. 1. "His own city," Matt. ix. 1. [3] Jos., *Vita*, 72.

have been large, since, even if it had been poor, a large community would assuredly have been able to secure for itself a building in which to worship. The troops stationed in such a place would hence be only a small body, consisting no doubt of provincial auxiliaries, either raised in Galilee or brought from some outlying province of the great Roman empire, though under the control of Herod Antipas, the local tetrarch. There was also a custom or inland revenue office, where dues were collected on the fish and other products of the locality, and also on goods brought to it, or passing through it. Christ, indeed, speaks of it as exalted unto heaven,[1] but this referred to its privileges, as favoured above other places with the proclamation by Him, of the Kingdom of God, and does not involve any reference to its size or importance.

Two sites have been proposed for this once busy place, Tel Hum and Khan Minieh, both of which I have visited.

Tel Hum lies near the head of the lake, on sloping ground, which slowly rises into low hills behind. Its name seems to point to the character of the ruins scattered over quite a large space, for Hum means "black," and the stones, with few exceptions, are of black basalt, which is abundant in the neighbourhood, volcanic action having once been very marked in this part of the country. "Capernaum" means "the village of Nahum," the prophet, and has no relation to the name Tel Hum. Squared stones of large size lie about in numbers, principally the wreck of ancient public buildings or rich mansions, not necessarily as old as Christ's day, though some of them may have belonged to humble enough houses, if those of Capernaum were like the lowly buildings still to be seen at Chorazin,

[1] Matt. xi. 23.

over the hill. Foundations run hither and thither, and mounds about the field speak of ruins below. At the edge of the bank over the strand are the remains of some building, probably a fort, more probably a church, some pillars still rising fifteen or twenty feet, in front. Some great squared stones of hard white limestone, that must have been brought from a distance, attract especial notice, for they have belonged in old times to the frieze, architrave, and cornices of a very fine synagogue, which some have fancied the one built by the centurion, though it is not at all certain that they are so old. The fact that all the pilgrims, since the fourth century, who have left records of their travels, agree in thinking this the site of Christ's "city," is supposed to establish its claims; but any one reading these memorials will feel how very untrustworthy their judgments are on the question. They accepted local traditions in fact, with blind submission; and these, as we know, are too often fanciful.

Another site, which appears the right one, has been proposed at Khan Minieh, on the upper end of the plain of Gennesaret, about three miles lower down the shore. Its very name seems to preserve the contemptuous Jewish hatred of the town as "the city of the Minai or heretics," the term by which they expressed their hatred of Christians. In Buxtorff's Lexicon a passage is quoted from the Talmud, in which "sinners" are defined as sons of Caphar Nahum, and these "sinners" are elsewhere in the lexicon called the "Minai." Capernaum, being "our Lord's city," was naturally regarded as the headquarters of His followers, and hence any spiteful name would be readily applied to it. It was, in fact, known down to the fourteenth century as once the centre of Christianity in the

district. "Here formerly dwelt the Minai," says a Jewish pilgrim, in A.D. 1334. Moreover, a spring, known as that of Capharnaum, is mentioned by Josephus as containing fish similar to some found in the Nile, and there is just such a spring, two and a half miles south of Minieh, which could irrigate a great part of the plain, and in it to this day is found the coracinus, a fish which abounds in the Nile also.

Khan Minieh is a beautiful spot, with a strong brook flowing into the lake at its northern side, through beds of Syrian papyrus, which, as readily as the reeds on the Jordan, may have suggested the contrast, by our Lord, of the constancy and firmness of the Baptist, with the "shaking in the wind" of such slender growths.[1] The sweet green sward heaves with buried ruins, which are dug up by the peasants, and burned for lime, or carried off to build into new structures. Foundations of walls, sometimes of squared blocks of limestone, are found at four feet or more below the surface, and a great many are met with, even eight or twelve feet down, the soil having buried them thus deeply. There was, moreover, a Roman road to Khan Minieh, from the north, which involved a custom house, while troops would be more useful at such a point than they could be at Tel Hum, where there was no such road, and the frontier was three miles off. To my judgment, Khan Minieh, now so desolate, represents the once busy Capernaum.

Assuming that it was so, it holds a very prominent place in the Gospels. It was here that Matthew, known also as Levi, was called from his post as petty collector of custom, to follow Christ; here, Simon Peter and Andrew lived in a

[1] Matt. xi. 7.

house near the lake ; and it was while they were busy on the shore, close by, that they were a second time invited to cast in their lot with our Lord, and, forsaking all, resumed the discipleship begun during John's preaching on the Jordan. Here also lived the centurion whose slave lay dying till restored, from a distance, by the word of the great Healer. Another prominent citizen, a nobleman, could also tell how his son had been raised from a nearly fatal illness, by a word of Christ spoken as far off as Cana of Galilee. Simon's wife's mother could speak of having been cured of her fever by Him. It must have been, besides, the town-talk for many a day, one would fancy, how the rabbi who lived in Simon Peter's house had cured the young man, who was carried up the outside steps to the flat roof, and let down through the summer-opening in it, and laid at Christ's feet. The fierce ill-will raised in connection with this astounding miracle, among the scribes, doctors of the Law, and Pharisees present from Galilee, Judæa, and Jerusalem, who said that Christ was not "sound," and that His claims were blasphemous, so that it was clear He wrought such works by the help of Beelzebub, the prince of devils, not by that of God,[1] would often be canvassed by the townsfolk.

Nor could they forget how, one Sabbath, Jesus had been accosted in the synagogue by a man with an unclean spirit, and how it had been cast out of him by a word, tearing him and roaring wildly as it left him, and how, after all this, the man was not hurt. It was in Capernaum, also, that Christ had taken a child and set him in the midst of the Twelve, and then, lifting him in His arms, had rebuked

[1] Matt. viii. 5-14; ix. 1, 9; Mark i. 16, 17, 29, 30; Luke iv. 38; v. 18; vii. 1; John iv. 46.

their disputes by the way, about the place they would each hold in His kingdom, telling them that he would be greatest, who had most of the humility of such a child as He then held in His bosom. Here also, just after the feeding of the thousands on the other side of the lake, that discourse had been given in the synagogue, which disappointed the crowd so much, by not promising them an earthly Jewish kingdom such as they expected from the "Messiah," that nearly every one but the Twelve forsook Him from that time. Nor were these the only recollections of Him, that would rise in the mind of the population and of the apostles, when He was no longer with them, for He had taught in the streets, and in the rich open plains stretching away from the town, and on the strand, and from the prow of a fishing-boat, moored a few yards from the beach. Every spot would seem to recall His voice, His looks, His mighty works. Yet, so hard is it to believe what we do not like, that, in spite of all this, He had to upbraid His fellow-townsmen because they did not repent. They were, He said, like children sitting in the market-places, whom nothing could please; neither dancing when their playmates piped to them in a make-believe marriage procession, nor beating their breasts when they wailed in a pretended funeral.[1] No wonder that He added, "Thou, Capernaum, shalt thou be exalted unto heaven (by all thy privileges)? Thou shalt go down into Hades."

In this terrible denunciation, our Lord joined two other places, Chorazin and Bethsaida, which must have been very near Capernaum to be thus grouped with it. Yet they have not, till now, been identified beyond challenge. The ruins known as Kerazeh, about two and a half miles

[1] Matt. xi. 16, 17, 20; xvii. 24; xviii. 1; Mark ix. 33; John vi. 59, etc.

north of Tel Hum, have of late years been generally accepted, from the name, as the site of the ancient Chorazin. The prince of Palestine topographers, Dr. Edward Robinson, has, however, identified it with Tel Hum, fancying that the place now called Kerazeh may have been a new Chorazin, built by the inhabitants after the destruction of their original home, in the last great Jewish war. St. Jerome, who lived from A.D. 331 to A.D. 420, speaks of the village as on the lake shore, but already desolate and uninhabited in his day; and he appears to imply that it was north of Bethsaida, as that was north of Capernaum, though all these must have been very close together, on so limited a stretch of landscape.[1] In any case, Kerazeh well repays a visit, many houses being still much as they were left in the time of our Lord or very soon after.

Riding north, along the shore, from Tel Hum, over a path doubtless often used by our Saviour, above the narrow shingly beach, a small but deep hollow from the low sloping hills opens on the left; the Wady Kerazeh. Well-nigh filled, through its whole length, with fragments of black basalt of all sizes, swept down by the winter storms, —the chaos of boulders, as it nears the lake, needs to be seen to be imagined. Between that and Kerazeh, millions of volcanic stones cover its bottom and sides, making it quite impassable for man or beast, and shewing the fierce activity of local volcanoes in remote ages. A skin of soil has since gathered over them, on the lower ground, but the rush of the winter torrent has laid them bare in its winding channel. On the upper heights of Lebanon there is just such a rain of lava, covering the slopes to an unknown depth, in the same way, with boulders of black

[1] Robinson's *Researches*, 1852, p. 359.

basalt. Such as the ascent to Kerazeh is to-day, it must have been in the days of our Lord. The path, if one can speak of a path where there was none, climbed slowly upwards, covered more or less thickly with this weird legacy of the age of Fire. The whole landscape, which, however, was not very wide, was rough with it, though some parts were less so than others, and on some spots, thus in a measure clear, there were small patches of grain. Two or three wretched camels were browsing among the stones, near some low Arab tents, raised in the shape of our sheds, but what attractions had led men to such a spot it is hard to conceive. Kerazeh itself stands in the midst of a scene of desolation, boulders lying so thick that it was a task for my horse to steer his way among them. The ruins cover as much ground as those of Tel Hum, and lie partly in a dry hollow, and partly on a crest of the hill, formed by a sharp bend of the wady. What could have induced any community to build a town in such a spot, is hard to imagine. The ruins, like the boulders, are of black lava, and are thus easily overlooked, but not a few arrest the attention. There are, for example, remains of a synagogue, with finely carved Corinthian capitals, of the hard black basalt, lintels, door-posts, carved stones, heads of pillars, and a huge round stone, of the same material, like an exaggerated millstone, about four feet thick and as broad—once the mighty roller of an olive press, for crushing the berries and squeezing out the oil. There are no olives now, though a few fig trees overshadow the graves of two Arab sheiks. But the most striking feature of the dreary spot is a number of houses, very likely as old as our Saviour's day, which still remain as they were when first built. Indeed, they may well do so, for their walls, which

are about six feet high, are two feet thick; in some cases of squared stones built without mortar, in others, of similar blocks nicely cemented. There is a low doorway in the middle of one of the sides, and a window, or possibly two, in each, but only of a foot high, and half that breadth. One or two stone pillars rise in the middle, within, to bear up the flat roof; but most of the houses are very small, some having two rooms, but most, indeed, only one, though there are one or two which had been divided into four small chambers. A spring bursts out in the middle of the place, beside the tree, at the Arab graves, but this was the only living thing to be seen. Towards the north, however, there are traces of a paved road, which linked the town with the great caravan track to Damascus. But again, what could have induced men to live in such a locality, where it seemed as if the grim contents of a burning mountain had been shot out over the whole district? Yet here there had been a busy community, and in its narrow streets Christ had often preached "the good news of the kingdom," alas, almost in vain!

Bethsaida, the third of the "cities" upbraided for its unbelief, seems to have stood at the pleasant spot on the lake shore, now known as Ain Tabigah, about two-thirds of a mile north of Khan Minieh. The nearness of the two places explains the familiar intimacy of Peter and Andrew and Philip, who belonged to this place,[1] with James and John, who, with their father Zebedee, lived at Capernaum, to which, indeed, Peter and Andrew after a time moved, as perhaps a better market. At Ain Tabigah, as Robinson spells it, there is a slight bay, with abundant vegetation growing to the water's edge. The hills sink behind it into

[1] John i. 45.

long low slopes, from which very strong springs of salt water rush out towards the lake, turning the wheel of a picturesque, stone-built mill a little way back. There is a little plain round the spot, sweetly green, and the beach is a narrow fringe of fine gravel, on which lie great quantities of small shells. Oleanders bend over the water, and reeds grow up in the shallows, in which many little perch dart hither and thither. Some of these were caught, there and then, by one of my boatmen, who waded in as silently as a shadow, and threw over them a circular net, weighted with lead at the edges. A great eight-sided Roman reservoir, built on the chief spring, spoke, with other less considerable ruins, of a community having once lived on the spot, now deserted for many centuries, though a church still stood at it in the eighth.[1]

These three places, Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, twice denounced by our Lord,[2] once, soon after the sermon on the mount, and again, on the sending out of the seventy disciples, thus lay on or near the shore of the lake, within a half circle of not more than five miles; and yet this minute circuit, not so large as many an English parish, was the sphere of "most of His mighty works;" the focus of His spiritual efforts. On so small a theatre was He contented to spend His life! Galilee, and even Judæa, no doubt, saw Him, once and again, teaching and preaching in their towns and villages; but the fact remains, that His most earnest efforts were expended on these three small communities and their neighbourhood, and that, after all, with a tragic want of success, for they remained indifferent to words and miracles, which, Christ tells us, would have melted the obduracy of Tyre and Sidon, or Sodom and Gomorrah!

[1] Robinson, 1852, p. 356. [2] Matt. xi. 20–24; Luke x. 13–16.

The plain of Gennesaret, on the northern edge of which Capernaum lay, if it be represented by Khan Minieh, is mentioned by Matthew and Mark[1] as the part to which our Lord came when He had crossed the lake, after feeding the multitude on the other side, and walking on the waters till He entered the boat, which the apostles were vainly attempting to row to land. So considerable a feature was this rich tract, that the lake took its name, in Old Testament times, and occasionally even in those of Christ.[2] It was the Sea of Chinnereth in the one, and the Sea of Gennesaret[3] in the other—the name rising apparently from the harp shape of both plain and lake.[4] Its beach is noteworthy as the special scene of the Galilean work of Christ; two of the three towns denounced by Him, however, lying slightly outside it. It is called also, by St. John, "the sea of Tiberias,"[5] and this is its ordinary name on the spot now; Tiberias being the only one of all the flourishing communities on its west side, which still has even a name to live. The "land," or "plain" of Gennesaret lies near the centre of the west shore, and extends for more than two miles north and south, in a half circle, reaching about two-thirds of a mile back at its deepest, and watered, or capable of being so, by several copious brooks and springs.[6] Josephus describes it as, in his day, a very Paradise, alike for beauty and fertility, rich in trees elsewhere peculiar to different zones: palms flourishing along with walnut trees, figs, and olives; grapes and figs ripening for ten months in the year. When I was there it lay in rough unused neglect; only tall coarse grass, thistles, thorns, and thick

[1] Matt. xiv. 34; Mark vi. 53.
[2] Num. xxxiv. 11; Deut. iii. 17; Jos. xi. 2; xii. 3; xiii. 27.
[3] Luke v. 1.
[4] Kinnôr, a hand-harp or lute.
[5] John vi. 1; xxi. 1.
[6] *Bell. Jud.*, iii. 10, 8.

clumps of oleander varying the desolation. In the few spots where industry redeems any of the soil, it yields the rarest variety of products: wheat, millet, barley, melons, tobacco, citrons, oranges, and even cotton, rice, sugar-cane, date palms, and other tropical growths. Its position, so much below the sea-level, and its consequent protection from cold winds, enables it, with the further advantage of the gradations of temperature secured by the hills behind, fanned in their upper slopes by the cooling north and north-west winds, to bring out these wide-ranging capabilities. Melons ripen a full month earlier than at Acre or Damascus. Salt, dissolved by springs from the soft limestone hills, and carried into the lake, makes it constantly more saline; and as the evaporation is so great that less water flows out of it than it receives, it must become more and more so. But it is not, as yet, to be compared, in this respect, to the Dead Sea, and the small population on its shores still use the water for drinking. The wild storm in which Christ calmed the waves recalls one of its characteristics, for, though usually lying calm in its girdle of a thousand-feet-high hills and tableland, it is often suddenly lashed into dangerous commotion by winds rushing down from the heights, though it as suddenly regains its placidity when the gusts blow past. I have seen it calm and then foaming, and again calm, on the same day. When I was at Tiberias, a storm rose in the night, which would have covered any boat exposed to it with the waves.[1] Twice over this is recorded to have befallen the apostles: once, when Christ lay asleep in the boat till they waked Him to save them, and again when He walked to them on the waves. The waters and the land were alike busy, and equally astir

[1] Matt. viii. 24; xiv. 24; Mark iv. 37; vi. 48, 51; Luke viii. 23.

with many industries, in His day, so that He could never fail to have an audience; and, indeed, when at the height of His popularity, the multitudes that crowded to hear Him were very great. It is, in fact, striking to note the language used respecting His temporary acceptance by the crowd. Before He had settled in Capernaum, we are told that His fame had spread far and wide in Galilee,[1] but presently He was rejected at Nazareth.[2] Soon after, when He was "standing by the Lake of Gennesaret," the multitude pressed on Him so that He had to go into a boat and address them from it.[3] Then we read of the multitudes seeking after Him; of the city (Capernaum) being gathered together at His door; of great multitudes following Him; of people coming to Him from every quarter, even when He had retired to desert places; of no room being left even at the door, for the crowds gathered to hear Him; and all this was in the district round Capernaum, or not far from it.[4] When He returned, after His second Passover, "a great multitude" from Galilee and many other parts, gathered round Him on the lake shore. "A great multitude" followed Him when He came to Nain. When John the Baptist was lying in prison, our Lord's popularity still attracted great numbers to Him, but it was just after He had given His warm eulogy on that great man, that He denounced the towns on the lake, because, in spite of all His teaching and miracles among them, they rejected Him. Still, we hear of "the multitudes" coming to hear Him, though even His relatives set Him down as out of His mind. Ever since the cure of the paralytic in Peter's house, however, His language had been more and more stern against

[1] Luke iv. 14. [2] Luke iv. 29. [3] Luke v. 1, 3.
[4] Matt. viii. 1; Mark i. 33, 45; Luke iv. 42.

the leading religionists of the day; the scribes and Pharisees. "Multitudes" were round Him when His mother came, seeking to speak with Him, and, soon after, we read of "many thousands" being gathered to hear Him. "The multitude," we are told, moreover, welcomed Him on His return to His own district, after having crossed to the Gergesenes. The throngs pressed and crushed Him as He went to the house of Jairus. When He sent out the Twelve, He was still the centre of great crowds. Now came the execution of the Baptist, but Jesus had a company of five thousand men, besides women and children, at Bethsaida Julias, over the lake, a little later, and still later He fed the four thousand.[1] All this, it will be observed, is spoken of the small district on the lake shore and near it; a stretch only equal to a large parish. But now the address was given in the synagogue at Capernaum, which finally ended this mere superficial interest in Him, many of His disciples going back when they heard it, and walking no more with Him; so great a number, indeed, that Christ asked the Twelve, if they, also, would leave Him.[2] He was already unable to venture into Judæa, because the Church party there sought to kill Him,[3] and He soon needed to withdraw from public notice, as far as He could, even in Galilee,[4] though it was on His return from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, that He fed the four thousand who had been with Him for three days. But He had, presently, to flee once more; this time, to Cæsarea Philippi,[5] where He was transfigured. From that time He had no home, or quiet sphere, west of the Jordan, and was virtually in the toils of those who hunted for His life. The

[1] Matt. ix. 36; xi. 7–20; xii. 46; xiv. 21; xv. 28; Mark iii. 7, 8, 20, 21; Luke vii. 11; viii. 40, 45; xii. 1.
[2] John vi. 66–68. [3] John vii. 1. [4] Mark vii. 24. [5] Matt. xv. 32; xvi. 13.

petty bounds of Gennesaret and other spots on the Lake of Galilee, almost within sight of it, may in fact be said to have been the limits of our Lord's missionary work, except when He went on occasional journeys, to the villages and little hill towns to the north or west. On so small a theatre was the miracle of His life mainly displayed!

Three miles below the rich level of Gennesaret, the great city of Tiberias caught the eyes of the inhabitants of Christ's own city. Sepphoris, a small hill village, behind Nazareth, had been the capital till Herod the Great's death, but when his son Antipas succeeded to the northern part of the land, his new dignity seemed to him to demand a more worthy metropolis. Choosing a site on the lake, therefore, he built Tiberias, laying it out some time about A.D. 18, when our Lord was twenty-two or twenty-three; its name being a compliment to the Emperor Tiberius, who had succeeded Augustus, and shewed great favour, as Josephus tells, to Antipas. It was, thus, the great topic of local interest, gossip, and activity, during the later years of Christ's life at Nazareth, from which the villagers, Jesus among them, must often have sauntered over the rising slopes, to Hattin, where they could see the various details of its progress. To enter the bounds of the new town itself, was, indeed, unlawful for strict Jews; old tombs and graves having been discovered, inside the proposed walls, and emptied of their ghastly contents, to make room for the houses. To visit or live in a place thus defiled was contrary to the Jewish Law, and entailed "uncleanness" for seven days. Many of the townsmen, Josephus adds, were Galileans, but many others were forced to remove from various parts of Herod's dominions, to add to the population. Poor people, also, were gathered from all

parts; some of them even slaves. To numbers of these, Herod gave their freedom, shewing favours of all kinds to the humbler settlers generally; building houses for them, and giving them ground, on condition of their not leaving the new city. But all the colonists were not thus obscure, for Oriental despotism forced not a few persons of good condition, to remove to the future capital.[1] As years passed, huge walls were zigzagged over the hills behind, bending at each end, to the water's edge, and enclosing a very large space in their long course of three miles. Vast cisterns were hewn out in the rock at many of their angles, and through their great thickness—for they were twelve feet thick, and built of huge stones—castle-like gates provided points of egress and ingress. A great fortress, commanding the whole neighbourhood, towered up, moreover, on the hills, in the line of the wall, a thousand feet above the lake. An aqueduct, nine miles in length, brought pure water from the uplands, and, along the beach, a great quay of squared stone extended from the north to the south end of the city defences. Eight pillars and a huge block of polished granite, all brought from Assouan, six hundred miles up the Nile, as part of some public building, still lie on the sand; one pillar, besides, still standing erect: a lintel of black basalt, carved with a hunting scene, speaks of the splendour of some doorway, and broken shafts and columns carry the mind back to a scene of varied wealth and splendour. For Herod himself, a gorgeous palace was raised, adorned, to the horror of the Jews, with carvings and paintings of animals, contrary to the Law, and an extravagance of luxury and splendour, in gilded halls and costly furniture, of which Josephus gives us a glimpse;

[1] Jos., *Ant.*, xvii. 2, 3.

speaking of its royal tables, and great candelabra of priceless Corinthian brass. Below the town, on the shore, and within the walls, were famous hot baths, still in use, but then, no doubt, marked by grand buildings, in which to enjoy the healing waters, though only covered, at this time, by a poor dilapidated dome. The water is very hot—about 144° Fahrenheit, very salt and bitter, with a strong smell of sulphur, of which, however, it has no taste. Even now, not a few come to seek benefit from bathing in it, but in Christ's day, when the court was at Tiberias, and population dense, the baths must have been frequented by throngs like those we see at German spas. Steam baths, like those near Naples, once much used by the Romans, were created on the hills behind the town, in hot air caves: the whole neighbourhood being volcanic. The modern Tiberias lies on the northern edge of that of Christ's day, and is a place peculiar even in Palestine for its wretchedness. The population is largely Jewish, for it is believed by the rabbis, that the Messiah is, some day, to rise out of the lake, and, after landing at Tiberias, to pass north, to Safed, which is to be the seat of His government. The poor Jews, chiefly from Prussian Poland; thin, filthy, and wretched, think themselves all important to the world, for, in their opinion, it is only by their special prayers, twice a week, that the destruction of all things is delayed. Our Lord seems never to have visited Tiberias; perhaps from unwillingness to put Himself in the power of "the Fox," its ruler. It may, however, have also been from a desire to avoid ceremonial defilement, which would have cut Him off, for the time, with His disciples, from intercourse with the general population, besides raising a prejudice against Him, as wilfully flouting the Law, though reputed a Rabbi.

The great town wall, however, up on the heights, with its huge gate buildings and lofty castle; the splendour of the palace; the strange glories of the public buildings and monuments, the flashing bravery of high officials hurrying to and from the palace and the military quarters: the soft clothing of lords and high dames, rowed, perhaps, by banks of oars in their gilded barges, on the lake, or borne, in their stately equipages, along the highways, or prancing on their high mettled steeds, were every-day sights to Christ and His fellow-townsmen at Capernaum, and the whole scene, in all its details, lay beneath them, as often as they happened to go up any of the heights towards Hattin.

At the southern edge of Gennesaret, lay the only other place on the west side of the lake, mentioned in the Gospels —Magdala, the home of the Mary whom Christ so beneficently healed of what is mysteriously described in the Gospels as being "possessed by devils." It is impossible to conceive a poorer place than this spot is now. There are not more than about a dozen one-story, flat-roofed cabins, built of mud and stones, without a window, so that the only light comes in at the door: a pillar of stones and mud in the centre of the one chamber, helping to support the roof of earth, laid upon a bed of reeds, and branches from the scrub near at hand. As elsewhere, one half of the floor is a little lower than the other; the higher part being the family quarters: the lower, sacred to the fowls, goats, and, perhaps, the ass, of the household. Slovenliness and misery reign on every side. A small brook trickles from the higher ground, towards the lake, through a fringe of brambles, wild mustard, coarse grass, and dung-hills, with a sprinkling, here and there, of thorny shrubs, and a plenti-

ful display of black basalt, scattered over the ground. The hamlet stands on a knoll, at a little distance from the water, towards which the surface sinks in other knolls and undulations, while, behind, the hills open into a valley which runs, westward, into that lying on the upper side of the Nazareth hills, with Cana of Galilee on its north slope and the modern Cana on its southern edge. These are twelve or thirteen miles away, but lie very much higher than Magdala: the lake being over 680 feet below the sea level, and Nazareth several hundred feet above it. Another ravine, or, rather, part of this one, is the famous gorge of Arbela, with precipitous sides, more than 1,000 feet high, where the wild Zealots of the generation before Christ found shelter. The cliffs are full, high up, of airy caves, now tenanted by vast flocks of pigeons, and numbers of less innocent birds, and there the "robbers" had their well-nigh inexpugnable quarters, till dislodged, and thrown down into the depths below, by Herod's soldiers, swung from the top in great cages. Hattin rises on the north side of this, with its towering "horns" of lava, but it is not seen from Magdala itself. A number of springs, welling out from the sides of the valley, some distance from its mouth, form the streamlet of the place, flowing languidly into a now ruined pool, filled, in great part, with stones, and so leaky that the ground near it is a quagmire. An old ruin of a tower rises beside this, veiled, in part, by a few fig trees and some elders, oleanders, Christ-thorn trees, and other growths of the locality. Spots of red ploughed land dot the slopes behind, and, here and there, one sees a patch of green, but the air of desolate wretchedness over the whole scene is touching. Nor is it lessened by the miserable squalor of the few people about, with their dreadfully

dirty half-naked children. The state of things was, no doubt, very much better in Christ's day, when the population was dense, and the soil carefully tilled, but Magdala could, at any time, have been only a very small place. Our Lord must often have been near it, but we read only once of His having "come into its coasts."[1]

On the eastern side of the lake, we find Christ only at two spots: the scene of the miraculous feeding of the multitude,[2] and that of the casting out devils from the poor man who called himself "Legion."[3] The five thousand had followed Him to the opening at the upper end of the hills, on the east shore, where the wide green slopes and broad hollow gave unusual facilities for seating the crowd in separate little companies. Rising from the lake, on the left hand, are the last slopes of the tableland: on the right, the ground sinks towards the broad green swampy tract through which the Jordan finds its way south. The people could get round the head of the lake by going above the marshy ground, but many would not need to take so much trouble, for boats were always crossing, in good numbers, from the populous western shore, to bring back fire-wood, produce, and passengers: such boats, I dare say, as one sees to-day used on the Nile, for similar purposes: rough, but pretty large: rather, small "sailing vessels" than boats.

Gadara, or Gergesa,[4] seems to have been near the present village Khersa, half way up the east side of the lake, which has, at once, the link to the sacred narrative, of a similarity in sound, and in its standing beside the steepest slope shewn by the cliffs; the water below, moreover, coming up close to

[1] Matt. xv. 39. It is called Magadan in the oldest versions.
[2] Matt. xv. 38; Mark vi. 44. [3] Mark v. 9; Luke viii. 30.
[4] Matt. viii. 28; ix. 1; Mark v. 1, 21; Luke viii. 26, 40.

its base. How strange to find so much of The Great Life spent on the borders of a mere petty loch, at its widest, not seven miles broad ; at its longest, not thirteen ; a mile shorter than Windermere ; eight miles shorter than Loch Lomond, and a mile narrower !

On so limited a theatre, let me once more point out, did Christ give mankind the lessons of the Divine life '

CHAPTER XI.

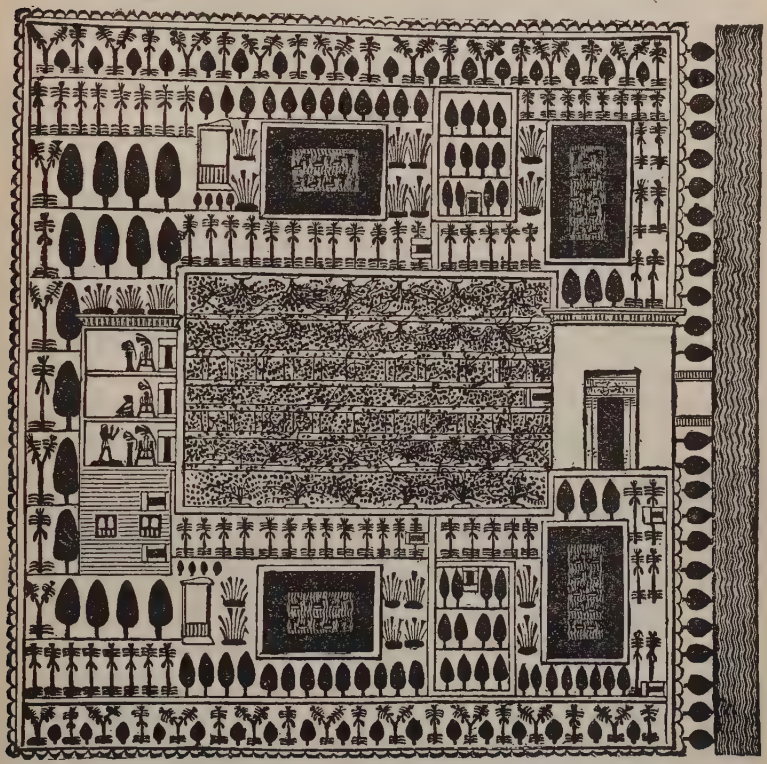
THE DAILY TOWN LIFE ROUND CHRIST.

It would be possible, from carefully noting the language of the Gospels, to restore to ourselves a wonderfully life-like picture of the daily scenes amidst which Christ moved. The houses of the peasantry, we may suppose, were then much what I have described them as being to-day; those of the humbler, and, naturally, much more numerous classes, being no doubt much the same as the dwellings of their successors in the towns of modern Palestine. Windowless, where only of one story, and shewing only lattices covering a few narrow openings at a greater height: with no pretence of architectural display outside, however elaborate within, in some cases; Eastern houses offer a long, dreary monotony of blank walls, broken only by doors or archways to the dwellings, or to their "yards" or "courts." Everything seen is remotely old, very much is more or less dilapidated, and, to add to the meanness of the whole effect, the houses have been planted in fine indifference to regularity; retreating, or jutting out from a straight line, as their owner has thought fit. An Oriental street, as a rule, finds its nearest western counterpart in the squalor of the lanes in a continental Jew quarter, or in a Scotch or English "wynd," or "slum," though, here and there, the general wretchedness may be broken by some public building of squared stone, or some exquisite

tomb, or fountain, to commemorate a saint, or embody a benefaction. White- or yellow-wash covers everything, with these exceptions, though the last coat may have been laid on by no means recently. In Jerusalem, at this time, the houses are mostly of two or three stories, and, in some cases, have as many as twelve to eighteen chambers, but this is very uncommon. The house at Troas in which St. Paul preached, was, we are told, of three stories: poor Eutychus having fallen out, at the lattice, into the street, from that height,[1] and we may assume that the Jewish capital would not be behind a provincial town, in this respect. But two stories are the rule even in fine houses, though the narrow limits of Jerusalem may have forced the erection of higher structures. Christ did not often, we may be sure, enter a great man's home, but if at any time He did so, He would find Himself, after passing through an archway, in an open court, along the sides of which ran a number of buildings of varying size, with separate stairs, galleries, and entrances: a group of houses, in fact, more or less connected: the open inner space on which they looked, set off, it may be, by a fountain in the middle, and the shade of growing trees and fragrant creepers festooning the walls. At Damascus, some of the courts of such mansions were beautiful, and the houses themselves had some halls or chambers of wondrous richness. In one case, the walls were crusted with precious stones, and inlaid with many tints of marble, in elaborate patterns, while the most delicate carvings were lavished on every prominent portion of the wall or roof, and great gardens behind stretched out with all Oriental attractions. At the British Consulate, a long arcade of marble arches, finely

[1] Acts xx. 9.

carved, led to a marble-floored hall; though, outside, from the street, no one would have dreamed, from the meanness of the plastered wall, that such magnificence lay hidden



ANCIENT EGYPTIAN GARDEN, WITH ORCHARD, VINEYARD, PONDS, AND A SMALL HOUSE.—*Wilkinson.*

within. In the country, the doors of the houses seem always open, as in our village cottages, so that any one can enter who pleases. In fact, there is no privacy, such as is sought with us, for the woman that was a "sinner" could

not come in to anoint a guest, in our dining-rooms,[1] nor would the most popular preacher among us find his room so thronged with many, coming and going, walking in from the street unasked, and leaving when they chose—that he would have no leisure so much as to eat.[2] But in Jerusalem the doors are always kept closed, and it would appear as if they had been so in Christ's day, for He speaks three times of knocking, to get them opened,[3] and in the Acts, we read of Peter knocking long at the gate of the house of Mary, the mother of Mark.[4] The streets are always narrow : often so much so that the roughly projecting upper story, or stories, seen here and there, are close together ; shutting out both light and heat. The narrowness is, indeed, designed to secure this, for the sun "smites" sorely in these warm lands, and shade is a necessity as well as a delight, in the heat of the day. But the want of "made" roads leaves everything very wretched underfoot. In the hot weather, the dust is inches deep, and, for this, in the rainy season, the equally deep mud is a poor exchange. Shops are mere recesses, with no glass, or front of any kind : the goods being displayed in what answers to the window space, a large part of which, however, is often taken up by the shopkeeper himself, squatted, with his feet under him, among his wares. Western ideas of style and display, either in the stock or the shop, must be banished, for paint seems unknown, and the carpentry looks, for the most part, to be very primitive amateur work of the shopkeeper himself. The roughest "stores" I ever saw in the backwoods of America, and I have seen many, are Bond Street or Broadway elegance, in

[1] Luke vii. 37.
[2] Mark vi. 31.
[3] Matt. vii. 7 ; Luke xii. 36 ; xiii. 25.
[4] Acts xii. 13.

their fittings and front, compared to most of the shops of Jerusalem at this time, and things could hardly have been better two thousand years ago, when the kindly Marcus Aurelius, as I have said, was forced to own that though he had till then thought the barbarous Sarmatians, Marcomanni, and Quadi, beyond the Danube, the most sordidly wretched of mankind, he found the Jews of Jerusalem still more degraded.

Sanitary arrangements are, even yet, utterly unknown in an Eastern town, and the state of things could not have been better in Christ's day. The Jewish quarter of Jerusalem, at this time, is a miracle of sordid abomination, but it is no worse than any other Oriental town or hamlet. To walk down a back street in the Holy City, after dark, without a lamp hung close to the ground before you, would be to invite a catastrophe. At Damascus, a pool of sewage from the houses round, lay almost at the door of a friend on whom I was calling; and at Jerusalem, the town sewage has been left to find its way through the loose rubbish outside the wall, till no one dare stir the foul mass, for fear of the plague. In picturing to ourselves the daily life of Christ, all this must be kept in mind, if we are not to content ourselves with a mere fancy sketch.

Among the crafts to whose members, as to others, our Lord appealed, the Gospels and the rest of the Scriptures mention, or imply, a curious variety. In the dark, arched, stone bazaars, gold- and silver-smiths, then as now, plied their ingenious trades, and exposed their wares. Earrings and nose-rings, lordly dishes of various metals, jewels of gold and jewels of silver, and drinking vessels of gold and silver, shone in locked cases. These implied a number of crafts; the purifier, with his little furnace and small

bellows, working before the crowds passing to and fro; the workman who shaped the vessel, the graver who covered it with his skilled adornments, and others. Lapidaries displayed their triumphs of art, and one could buy pearls, precious stones, and coral, finely set, in costly mountings. The anvil, the hammer, the tongs, the chisel, and the crucible, were busy, and the din of many kinds was doubtless unceasing, for the hammer plays a great part in all Oriental metallurgy. Workers in brass or copper had their own small quarter, and displayed their trays, and larger or smaller bowls, ewers, and other productions, as their successors do now, and there were booths for iron-ware. Arms of all kinds were to be seen—spears, helmets, swords and the like. The peasant could get the rude implements of his toil, and the Arab found a choice of bits and stirrups as well as weapons. Locks and keys had their dealers, and wooden-wares their special stalls. Vessels and dishes of pottery of many kinds abounded, in their own section of the town. Leather was plentiful in the booths of the saddlers and shoemakers, who hung out their bridles, harness, and saddles, or their slippers and sandals, as is now done in all bazaars and Eastern streets. Linen, woollen, and cotton goods, had many sellers, and, of course, there was no lack of tailors. The art of the weaver was very famous among the Jews, and foreign goods of high class were, no doubt, imported from Tyre and Egypt, for bright colours and rich embroidery are dear to Orientals. Sellers of ointments, salves, and incense, were more numerous than with us, for in hot climates there is more need to overpower bad smells than in colder lands. The bakers had a spot to themselves, in Jerusalem, where they doubtless tempted passers by, with their sweet attractions; the

baker being also the local confectioner in Eastern countries. The cheesemakers were grouped together in the hollow, west of the Temple. The barbers, who are a great institution in the East, seem to have done their full share in adding to the business of the Holy City. In Eastern towns, all trades are carried on, largely, in the open air, from shaving, to hammering out copper trays or bowls, and we may be sure it was the same in Palestine, in the days of our Lord. Even the dentist performed, more or less, in the open street; and, just as one has to do to-day, our Lord would have to thread His way through a crowd of people on foot, mechanics busy at their callings, or riders on asses, and not seldom would have to get out of the way of a huge camel, stalking slowly through the confusion. For it is to be remembered that there are few pavements for those walking; every one goes where he sees a possibility of progress, whether he be riding a donkey or leading a gigantic camel,[1] and the East never changes.

The restless industry which marks the crowded and unsavoury lanes and bazaars of Jerusalem was characteristic of the Jew long ago, as much as it is to-day, though his activity is much less expended on laborious callings now, than it was then: the lighter arts of money dealing, in its many branches, or of middlemen in commerce, or of the journalist, or professional man, having taken the place, in Western communities, of the humbler toil of the mechanic. Two thousand years ago a healthier tone pre-

[1] The texts on which this sketch is based are, among others, the following: Gen. xxiv. 22, 53; Exod. xxviii. 11, 17; xxxii. 4; Judg. v. 25; xvi. 21; 1 Sam. xvii. 5; 1 Kings vii. 14; x. 21; Ezra v. 14; Ps. xlv. 14; Prov. xvii. 3; Cant. i. 10; Isa. i. 22, 24; xix. 9; xli. 7; xliv. 12; Jer. vi. 29; xlviii. 12; Lam. iv. 2; Ezek. xvi. 10; xxii. 18; Amos iii. 12; Matt. iii. 4; xiii. 55; xxvi. 7; xxvii. 7; Mark vi. 3; ix. 3; xvi. 1; Luke xxiii. 56; John xix. 39; Acts x. 6; 2 Tim. iv. 14. A reference Bible will shew many more allusions to trades, etc.

vailed; to follow a handicraft was not then, as now, left to the most wretched of the population; and to give one's self to learned studies, exclusively, was condemned, while the learning of a trade was laid down as a duty. "Rather work on Sabbath," said the rabbis, "than be dependent on your fellows: do any work, even the meanest, openly, that you may maintain yourself, and do not say, I am a priest, I am a man of position; handwork is below me." Like St. Paul, the greatest rabbis followed trades. One was a sandalmaker, another, a smith, another, a woodsplitter, and he the most famous of the order—the great Hillel. Yet some callings were in less repute than others, for no weaver, barber, tanner, ointment maker, or fuller, could be a high priest; fullers, or, as we might call them, "scourers," having their yards only outside the town, like tanners, who sought places near streams or pools or on the sea shore.[1]

In His journeys through the country our Lord necessarily came in contact with many forms of industry, in a population so dense as that of Palestine in those days; involving not only a great demand for the common wants of life, but a large market for varied forms of luxury, among rich Jews and Roman officials, and also for exportation. The customs and fashions of the East are so unchanging that we may feel sure the scene round Christ, day by day, was very much the same as one meets at this time, in wandering through the Holy Land. The same long, loose, flowing garments, turbans, girdles, slippers or sandals, "clokes" and "coats" as we see now, were those of His day, with little variation. The bare-legged barber, in his jacket, sash, and wide "divided skirt," closed to

[1] Acts x. 6.

below the knees, solemnly shaving the whole skull of a customer, while the hair on the face was left untouched, must have been familiar to Him, and the turban covering the bare head no less so. The women would be veiled in the streets, never speaking, in public, to men ; the peasant women could wear only a long sack of some common fabric : their arms, legs, and even breasts often remaining more or less bare, though, on meeting a man, their veil would be drawn over the lower part of the face ; the working peasants would then, as now, toil on in their one long cotton or linen shirt, kept round their waist by a strip of leather ; the legs and arms, and, as a rule, the feet, left bare : cold weather by night or through the winter months being met by a "coat," rude but warm, of coarse camel or goat-hair cloth or of sheepskin, with the fleece turned inwards : the mourner would be seen in a coat of rough sacking : the poor women would be tattooed on their faces and elsewhere, with dark blue markings : the rich would ride or stalk past in soft clothing of the brightest colours : the Roman auxiliary soldier in his uniform : the priest and Levite in their special dress : the Pharisee in his long gaberdine and mortar cap, like a tarboosh : the mechanic scantily covered by a single shirt-like garment, when at work.

As He passed through the outskirts of towns and villages He would see the gardener using his naked feet, to open and shut the runlets of water, so as to let them soak his "beds;" and in Joseph's workshop at Nazareth, as elsewhere, the carpenter would sit on the ground at his work, holding with his bare toes the wood he was sawing, as I have often seen, or putting together the rude frame of a plough, so light that a man can carry two on his shoulders

with the greatest ease, or making a yoke for the oxen, or pegs for the walls of the lowly village houses, or a primitive cradle, or a feeding trough for the goats or the ass, or a box for the treasures of the humble matron. The mounted Arab, with his great spear, twelve feet long, and his sword at his side, his dress the same as that of his descendant to-day, would frequently come in our Lord's way, for then, as now, Arabs doubtless often rode in from the desert, on some more or less doubtful errand. Caravans from Damascus and Palmyra would bring Him in contact with Syrians, and men from distant parts of Asia, and on the great line of trade, along the coast or from it, He would meet strangers from the Mediterranean lands. The troops quartered by Rome in the provinces, moreover, were in great part from remote divisions of the empire, and in this way also, His world-wide human sympathies would be gratified and instructed. As in the British army, however, regiments are named from the county in which they are raised, provincial cohorts, as I have said, took the name of the district where they had been recruited, and thus there were, among others, moving from one military post to another, at due intervals, the Ascalon cohort, and the cohorts of Damascus, Ituræa, Samaria, and Tyre. A regiment of Thracians, another of Germans, and a third of Gauls, each with its special uniform and equipments, had followed the bier of Herod, as a small part of that great military display. Military posts were dotted all over the land. Cæsarea had both cavalry and infantry: a cohort lay in Jerusalem, and detachments occupied many other places of less consequence. There was a garrison at Legio, on the great plain of Esdraelon, where its marches and reviewings could be seen from the Nazareth hills; the strains of its band, and the calls and

flourishes of its trumpets, moreover, being very probably heard on them, in the dry air of Palestine. Samaria was a special favourite with soldier and officer alike; quarters there being among a friendly people and in a district rich in wine, oil, fruit and corn. All over the fertile centre of the land were small posts. Thus there was one at Ascalon, another at Gaza, and a third at Beersheba, where the young officers must have had a dreary time, on the edge of the desert, with only bare gray slopes round them, and wild Arabs flitting hither and thither in hope of plundering some caravan. At Capernaum there was, as we know, a centurion and his soldiers: Jericho had a strong garrison; and there were troops in Machærus, across the Dead Sea, where the Baptist was put to death. The trumpets of the garrison at Tiberias echoed far and near, day by day, and the marching out of the troops must have brought them frequently past Christ, for He lived only a very few miles off. Soldiers are often mentioned in the Gospels. Some of them came to the preaching of John; the centurion at Capernaum alludes to those under him; a detachment was sent to Gethsemane, to arrest Jesus; and soldiers were the executioners at Calvary, after having scourged and mocked our Lord in the barracks at the Prætorium.[1]

The Temple, in its various requirements, gave maintenance to multitudes, in widely different ways. We may realize this from the number of people who found employment in connection with the temples of Egypt, though some details of the worship in these, needed services not required in the worship at Jerusalem. Still, there were the rabbis of the Temple "schools," or, as they might be called, "theological halls;" young students of the Law, in

[1] Matt. viii. 9; xxvii. 27; Luke iii. 14; John xix. 23.

great numbers; gatekeepers; water carriers; washermen and washerwomen; cooks; men in charge of the wood for the altar; preparers of ointments and purveyors of incense; tailors, to make the priests' linen; keepers of the lamps; money changers; sellers of beasts, large and small, for offerings; dealers in pottery, used for the Passover and other feasts; in salt, oil, and flour. Moreover, all the tradesmen of the city profited by the huge influx of pilgrims, at the high festivals and at other times, as the shopkeepers of the Continent find a harvest in the expenditure of the English and American tourists.

Thus, we meet in the Gospels as many callings as there are amongst ourselves, and with their endless variety, each busy in its own way, our Lord had to do, day by day: seeking to lift the thoughts of the busy population from their ordinary sordid level, to the higher interests of "The Kingdom of God." It must, indeed, have been very much with Him as it is now with the missionary who seeks to gain the ear of Hindoo villagers, or mechanics, or townsmen generally, or as with a pious soul who tries to better men's lives and hearts in the slums of New York or of East London.

In the Gospels we see brought before us, directly or by implication, wine growers and wine sellers, makers of writing tablets, shepherds, clerks registering population and other returns, weavers of cotton, linen, flax, and goats' or camels' hair, dove sellers, makers of swords and the like, priests in great numbers and of many grades (like our archbishops, bishops, deans, canons, rectors, vicars, or curates), scribes devoted to copying and studying the Law, sellers of spices, leather workers, tanners, labourers, gardeners, woodcutters, tailors, tax collectors, carpenters, shoe and

sandal makers, well-sinkers, cistern and grain pit excavators, bakers, masons, architects, stonecutters, dealers in fruit, grain dealers, potters, water-carriers, rope makers, reapers, physicians, slaves; writers of book-rolls, synagogue elders, readers, and other minor officials; boat builders, net-makers, fish curers; rabbis following many different callings; weavers of sleeping or sitting mats, grave diggers, tomb-cutters, washers of the dead, wailing men and wailing women, flute players and other musicians; millers, workers with reeds for mats, roofs, etc., flax-growers and spinners, salt sellers, lamp makers, coopers; judges, jailers, bailiffs; trumpet makers, smiths, house-painters, white-washers, grocers, fine-cloth workers, fine-stuff workers; basket makers, broom makers, key smiths, sparrow sellers, purse makers, gate porters, sowers, leaven makers, mill-stone makers, cement makers, jewellers, gold- and silver-smiths, copper-smiths, dealers in pearls and precious stones, swineherds, chain and fetter makers, fullers, skin-bottle makers, butchers, beggars, staff makers, wallet makers, girdle makers, oar makers, makers of cups, and pots, and brazen vessels, couch and table makers, and sacking weavers; teachers of the young, travelling merchants, egg dealers, poultry men, ass and camel drivers; the maimed, the blind, the lame; needle makers, cutters of sycamore figs, money lenders and thieves; stone-hewers, makers of phylacteries, makers of wooden-ware, lantern makers, torch makers, club makers, sponge sellers, vinegar makers, seal cutters and others. All these mingled in the towns and villages, through which our Lord, in the course of His public life, passed, in frequent circuits, proclaiming the New Teaching: He had, indeed, just such a state of things round Him, as He would have if He were to appear now

in any modern population. That He should have made so little impression, and should have had, apparently, so little success; that the words of the prophet—"He was despised and rejected," could be applied to Him in all their fulness, was only what every true messenger from God, in any age, has found his own lot; for a prophet denouncing the corruptions of his day, is always hated and persecuted while living, though honoured enough when once silenced in death. I remember standing on the bridge of boats at Stamboul, watching the crowds hurrying over it: men of many races, in their varied national dresses: Circassians, Kurds, Nubians, Turks, Greeks, Armenians, Arabs; some in uniforms, some in "gorgeous apparel," as became high State officials; others with only the pretence of clothing which marks the Oriental mechanic, porter, labourer, or beggar; a huge, over-fed idiot among the rest, bareheaded, and with only a strip of matting round his great body—the object of superstitious awe to a crowd who followed him as half sacred from his insanity; and as the strange multitude swept on, I thought how terrible the undertaking would be, to interest any number of the endless stream, in a new religion! Utterly indifferent to higher thoughts; more than satisfied with the religions they already professed: bigoted to stolidity in some cases; children, in ignorance, as a rule: fiercely fanatical, almost without exception, against any one attempting to disturb their religious atmosphere; it was clear that the hope of gaining them as converts to any new faith was faint indeed, unless some impulse from above bent their wills.

CHAPTER XII.

THE COUNTRY POPULATION ROUND CHRIST.

It is a mistake to imagine that the population of Palestine in the days of Christ was, as a whole, like the fierce bigots for "the traditions of the elders," who so early and so bitterly opposed Him. The ten thousand legal precepts of the rabbis could not be honoured by the toiling multitude: the struggle of life making the observance of such countless requirements impossible, and their callings, in many cases, in themselves involving "defilement." Hence, we read of "the common people,"[1] or, rather, "the great multitude"—as contrasted with those who fancied themselves superior. The word used is, indeed, equivalent to our expression, "the masses," and is generally translated in our version, as "the multitudes," or "the people."[2] The rabbis and their disciples, who constituted what the world knew as "the Jews," had "a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge,"[3] for the countless details implied in strictly keeping the Law, "bound heavy burdens, grievous to be borne, on men's shoulders;" "a yoke which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear."[4] Hence, even in towns there were such large numbers who had never been able to carry out the innumerable rabbinical ordinances, that the Pharisees could haughtily say, in

[1] Mark xii. 37. [2] Matt. iv. 25; xiv. 13, etc. [3] Rom. x. 2.
[4] Matt. xxiii. 4; Luke xi. 46; Acts xv. 10.

Jerusalem itself,—"this multitude which knoweth not the Law are accursed,"[1] and if this were the case in the Temple city, it must have been still more so with the peasantry, whose lives were spent in hard outdoor labour, through their whole lives. By far the larger part of the population, therefore, were virtually outcasts, in the eyes of the religionists of the day, who shunned them, as "accursed" of God, since the exact observance of "the Law," in the rabbinical sense, was regarded as indispensable to the securing favour with Heaven. To come near them was to be defiled, and thus to endanger one's own future, and hence these despised myriads were left like "lost sheep." No wonder, therefore, that they roused the profound compassion of our Lord, at seeing them thus "distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd,"[2] or that, as no rabbi would do it, He, Himself, made them His care. But that any one should interest himself in their spiritual welfare, or even think of them at all, was something altogether new and wonderful, and roused an enthusiasm in them, towards Him, like that shown towards Whitefield and Wesley, by the long neglected multitudes in Britain, in the middle of last century. Matthew speaks fifty times of the "multitudes" that followed Him, or were felt to be on His side, repeatedly calling them "great," and once "very great," and the other Gospels mention them ninety-nine times more. Yet Christ's public life was too short for Him to realize great success in His ceaseless labours on their behalf, though many, no doubt, of these poor, toiling, heavy laden souls, came to Him and found "rest." But the Church authorities could not allow an earnest reformer like our Lord, to disturb their vested interests,

[1] John viii. 49. [2] Matt. ix. 36.

or challenge their prescriptive title as monopolists in the sphere of religion.

This despised commonalty bore, in the very name given them, the brand of their invidious position. As the old word, in use among the Romans in Britain for the humbler classes, has left us its contemptuous significance in our adjective "vulgar:" as the German "Bauer," a "labouring peasant," has become our word "boor;" as the old Roman word for a "colonist" has grown into our "clown;" so the Hebrew expression Am-ha-arets—a "country man," or, in fact, labourer of any kind, had become a name of contempt long before the time of Christ. We have seen how the common people were held "accursed" by the religionists of that day, but their bitterness did not end even there. For these poor "groundlings," to use another sneering English word, borrowed from a peasant's work on the soil, the rabbis had no language too scornful. "There are grades of manners among boors" (whether of town or country), says the Talmud: "but they are all on a dead level of stupidity; unable to learn the Law and thus follow true wisdom." "Six things mark the right treatment of these groundlings," says another text—"Their testimony is not to be taken (in court): no secret is to be intrusted to them —no testimony is to be borne in their favour: nothing is to be told them, if what they lose be found; no one is to be seen in their company, and no one is to put them in any place of trust."[1] The haughty precisians who thus looked down on the mass of their fellow-countrymen as a white man looks on a negro in the States, or as a Norman regarded a Saxon, formed a hateful Jewish Brahminism, insolently proud, in their assumption that they were the

[1] Quoted in Buxtorff's Lex. 1626.

chosen few from all mankind, selected by God for His special favour, from their merit in fulfilling the Law, in the rabbinical sense. Trusting thus in themselves, that they were righteous, and, as such, legally entitled to a place in the Kingdom of God, they "despised others."[1] Jerusalem, as the headquarters of Rabbinism and the seat of the Temple, was their chief centre, but they were scattered, more or less thinly, over not only Palestine, but the whole civilized world, choosing, however, cities, towns, or large villages as their home, and avoiding the country or country life, which interfered with their observance of the "traditions of the elders," that is, of the rabbis of the past. The presence of a synagogue in any provincial town or village shewed that at least ten Jews, recognized as such by the religious world of the day, lived there, for where ten were found, it was obligatory to have a synagogue:—often, of course, a very small affair. There were, no doubt, many pure Jews, who had more or less drifted into the general multitude of "common people," held accursed for neglecting "the Law," for in a Jewish as well as a moral sense, "all were not Israel, who were of Israel."[2] The bulk of the provincials of Palestine, however, were descendants of the original inhabitants, among whom the Hebrews, under Joshua, had effected a settlement. This is seen, even now, from the fact that many words common among the peasantry of to-day, are found in the Hebrew Bible or on the Assyrian monuments, shewing that their language is much more a survival of the old Syriac, and of the Aramaic patois spoken by them in the days of Christ, than a corrupt form of the Arabic of the early times of Mohammedanism, as has sometimes been fancied. It is, in fact, intimately connected with the language of

[1] Luke xviii. 9. [2] Rom. ix. 6.

the Canaanites, which we can trace back, on Egyptian monuments, to the era of Thothmes III., sixteen hundred years before Christ; long centuries before the Hebrews under Joshua had made their invasion; and it is, also, closely related to the language found in Phœnician inscriptions, on the Moabite stone, and on the inscription in a small rock tunnel at Siloam. The Aramaic spoken in Christ's day was, still, the language of the rabbis in the fourth century, and Jerome[1] was able, in that late age, to study, in Palestine, what he called the Canaanitish language. In Christ's day, the ordinary language of the country was called Hebrew,[2] the difference of dialects being overlooked in the contrast of all with Greek, which had been widely spread among the educated classes of Western Asia, through the conquests of Alexander the Great, and the reign of Greek dynasties at Antioch and in Egypt. In the Temple services the language used was really Hebrew, which was also that of the synagogue, though a few Aramaic expressions had crept in, and some concessions had been made to the Greek-speaking Jews, known as "the Hellenists." But the language of the people, over the land, was a provincial dialect of Aramæan, or Syriac, called Sursi, which was a branch of the language spoken from Damascus to beyond the Tigris, and still surviving in the district round Urumiah, in Armenia. Long before the Exile to Babylon, the language of their heathen neighbours, and of the old races among whom they lived, had modified that of the Jews. Written Hebrew already shewed this influence in the time of the later kings, and this growing transition continued to gather strength while Judah was on the Euphrates, amidst Aramaic, till, step by step, the Jew exchanged his own language altogether, for

[1] Jerome, A.D. 331–420.

[2] Acts xxi. 40.

this, which was the common speech of the whole region of the Exile.

The mother-tongue of Abraham, who came from Mesopotamia, had not been Aramaic, but practically identical with the language of Babylon and Assyria, and of the Phœnicians and Canaanites, who, like the Jews, had migrated from the lower Euphrates to the other side of the Jordan. But time alters all languages, and both Hebrews and Phœnicians gradually varied from that of their old Chaldæan home, though still very closely allied, and, in the same way, the Aramaic of Palestine, brought back by the returning exiles, from Babylon, grew, by slow advances, different, in some measure, from that of their brethren who remained on the Euphrates.

The country people, using the word in a wide sense, among whom Christ laboured, were, no doubt, like their descendants at this day, to a large extent the representatives of the old races. No nations are ever exterminated by any conquest of their land, and Scripture expressly tells us that great numbers of the native population remained after the Hebrew invasion: such numbers, indeed, as speedily drove the new-comers from the fertile sea-plain, to the comparatively barren hills, and held them in subjection, in the northern half of the land, till Barak's victory, in the time of the Judges. The successive floods of invaders have added new elements to the strange mosaic, but, even now, all words describing the natural features of the country, such as rocks, torrents, pools, springs, and the like, are the same, on the lips of the existing peasantry, as they are in the pages of the Hebrew Bible. Still, "the common people" who heard Christ gladly, and gathered round Him in such multitudes, must have been, largely,

degraded Jews—more or less Hebrews in blood, but outside the pale of the rabbinical observances ; like the masses of our cities, who, while nominally Christian, live in practical neglect of all religious worship. This seems beyond question from the repeated statement of our Lord, that He "was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."[1] "Go not," said He, to His apostles, "into any way that leads to the heathen" (in the coast cities), "and enter not into any city of the Samaritans : but go, rather, to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."[2] Proscribed by rabbi, Pharisee, and precisian, they were the Cagots, or Pariahs, or Sudras, of Judaism ; lost in great measure to self-respect, from the disrespect universally shewn them by their brethren, who plumed themselves on being "righteous," and drew in their skirts from them as "sinners." It was natural that the Divine enthusiasm of humanity in Jesus, should pity such hapless and hopeless members of His race, and should seek, as the Good Shepherd, to bring them back to the fold of God's kingdom.

The life of the rural population in Christ's day, may, no doubt, in the unchanging East, be realized, in some measure, by that of the peasant of to-day. As early as October the fellah puts in the winter seed of wheat, barley, and lentils, though the sowing may, at times, be put off by the rains, till December. The soil, which, except on Esdraelon, is nearly everywhere very stony, is broken up by a most primitive plough, consisting only of a light, rough, wooden shaft, in two pieces ; the upper one tied to a cross piece, for the oxen to drag : the lower, fixed into a flat wooden coulter, very rough and light, but shod with iron at the point. At the opposite end, an upright piece

[1] Matt. xv. 24. [2] Matt. x. 5, 6.

of wood, as rough as all the rest, serves for a handle. A lad can carry such a plough on his shoulder with ease. Joseph and Jesus had, year after year, busied themselves in making such implements, with adzes and augers, for no plane touches any part of them. The furrow is, at best, a mere scratch, only sufficient to disturb the very top of the soil. The plough is drawn by a yoke of the wretched oxen of the country, but I have seen a camel used in their place, or even a camel and an ox, or an ox and an ass. When the soil is rocky, or matted with thorns, so that ploughing is difficult, a mattock is used to break up the ground, but, in any case, getting the ground ready is often very slow work, as the peasant may have to walk or ride on his barebacked donkey, carrying his plough or mattock, a long distance to his patch ; returning home each evening. Hence the putting in of the winter seed often lasts till January. Once fairly sown, the time for the summer crops of dhourra—a kind of millet—and sesame, a plant bearing oily seeds, follows ; both these growing during the dry season. Tobacco, cotton, cucumbers, and melons, are also grown in summer, being planted after the rains and ripening during the hot months; thanks to the heavy night mists from the Mediterranean. The division of the land to the various peasants is still decided by drawing lots ; the meeting for the purpose being held in the open ground before a village, under the superintendence of the village scribe, who is the functionary attending to all the writing, or accounts, of the little community. The lot may fall, one year, in a pleasant place close to the village : next year, in some poor spot on a hill-side, far off, needing a long journey to and from it each day.[1] The peasants

[1] Ps. xvi. 6.

count their ploughs, and the division of the land is made accordingly, but some one may get only half a lot, and, in that case, joins with a neighbour. The would-be cultivators are divided into classes, according to the extent of ground assigned ; each class having a sheik, or "elder," as its spokesman ; the land voted it including both good and bad, that there may be fairness to all, and being finally subdivided by the sheik among his party. The boundaries are marked by furrows and stones, to remove one of which is still regarded as about the worst of crimes.[1]

In the broad plain of Sharon, or, below Joppa, in the Philistine plain, the reaping and housing of the crops occupies many hands : the poorer peasants acting as reapers for the richer ; the women following as gleaners. No one in the East works like an Englishman or an American : few caring to stand if they can squat on their heels. I have seen masons at work seated thus, and reapers often move leisurely on, in the same lazy way ; a leather apron in front of them, to protect their bare breast and legs. A threshing-floor, which is always in the open air, and, if possible, on a rocky spot, as easily swept, is the property of the little community, and is a very busy scene when the crops are being carried to it. What with children gathered for the sight ; idlers straying to it ; the constant arrival of asses or camels with loads of sheaves ; the slow tread of the oxen drawing the rough-bottomed threshing sledge round and round, over the circle of grain ; the restless tossing and turning of the straw with the fork and "fan,"—a broad wooden shovel ;—the flying cloud of chaff ; and the piling up of the broken straw, or teben—the chief fodder of the country—in the centre, the scene is at once interest-

[1] Deut. xxvii. 17.

ing and picturesque, and it must have been just the same in Christ's day as in ours. During the four months of summer the peasant has nothing to fear from bad weather, and, through the ripening of one crop after another, he almost lives at the threshing floor all this time ; the villages being, meanwhile, well-nigh deserted, at least by the men. The winnowing follows threshing ; a time when a fresh air blows being chosen. When cleaned, the grain is thrown up in a heap on the threshing floor : the owner generally sleeping on it, or close to it, for it must lie till the tax gatherer has come and taken the Government toll from it.

In Christ's day, the vine, for the growth of which Palestine is exceptionally suited, was cultivated very much more widely than it has been since Mohammedanism proscribed the use of wine. In the Gospels, as in the Old Testament, it is mentioned so often, and, not rarely, so unfavourably, as to shew that the Jews of those times not only drank wine, but, in too many cases, took it to excess. The vow of life-long abstinence from "strong drink," taken by his parents for John the Baptist, and the accusation of our Lord as a "winebibber," imply this, and Christ speaks of those who "eat and drink with the drunken,"[1] while the master of the humble marriage feast at Cana speaks of old wine being brought out after men have "drunk freely." The apostles, moreover, were, as a matter of everyday experience, supposed to be drunk, when they spoke with tongues, at Pentecost ; and the Jewish converts in the different churches are often warned against intemperance, as, indeed, His disciples were by Christ ; drunkenness being especially named as a danger before them. Leaving

[1] Matt. xxiv. 49 ; Luke xii. 45 ; xxi. 34 ; John ii. 10 ; Acts ii. 15 ; Rom. xiii. 13 ; 1 Cor. v. 11 ; vi. 10 ; xi. 25 ; Gal. v. 21 ; Eph. v. 18 ; 1 Thess. v. 7 ; Rev. xvii. 2, 6.

it to the free choice of all, however, whether they would give themselves pleasure in the moderate use of wine, or, like John the Baptist, voluntarily abstain from it, as an example to their fellows, and for their sake, He supplied wine to the festivities of Cana. The vineyard yielded Him the vivid parables of the Labourers, and also of the Wicked Husbandmen, and He could use no emblem of Himself more instantly intelligible, than by saying He was "the true vine." The cup at the Last Supper, we are told, was not tasted by Him, but His parched lips were moistened with sour wine or vinegar, when He was hanging on the Cross.

Vineyards were then, as now, generally on otherwise useless hill slopes, though, both at Hebron and in Cœle-Syria, I saw many exceptions to this. It is, indeed, wonderful, how the vine flourishes in Palestine, even where there is no appearance of soil. At Baalbek, I walked over wide stretches of coarse shingle, like that of the sea coast, and noticed it everywhere planted with vine roots, which, I was informed, struck down to soil below, but, at any rate, grew well and yielded large returns. At the hospital, also, on the top of one of the hills at Nazareth, vines and fruit trees had been planted on a levelled space, among chips of soft white limestone; no question ever rising as to their future vigour. Christ would often pass vineyards where there are none now, and see the press, hewn out in the rock, in many; with its upper trough for holding the grapes, and one below, to catch the juice flowing out under the feet of the treaders. The thick walls of loose stone enclosing the vineyards, and also serving to use up some of the innumerable stones covering the ground, were familiar to Him. At Hebron, the lanes between the vineyards are filled deep with such stones, thrown out from the enclosures, though

the walls, built from the inexhaustible supply, were four or five feet in thickness. As on the Rhine, or in Italy, or Sicily, terraces along the steep hillsides would often, in Christ's day, give space for many vines, as one still sees at Bethlehem. In some parts, however, He would see hedges of the huge prickly-pear cactus, then, as still, used in sandy places where stones are scarce. A watch tower rose in some vineyards, and in all He would notice the frail booth, under which the keeper sought shelter from the sun by day and from the moon by night. Then, as now, the vines would make little show, for they are simply a rough stem, about four or five feet long, with three or four shoots running out from the top; the whole, bent down nearly to the ground, from which the runners are kept by some low forked supports. Two thousand years ago, as now, the peasant was rarely the owner of the ground on which he toiled, but a mere day labourer, glad of his penny, when the approaching darkness set him free to seek new strength in sleep, for another day's labour. Poverty, deep beyond our conception in the happier West, has always been the lot of the masses in the East, but their position was exceptionally sad in Christ's day. The poor are spoken of twenty-five times in the Gospels. The huts of the peasantry were so miserably dark, that the woman who lost a piece of silver had to light a lamp, even in the brightness of an Eastern day, to look for it. The great man's steward had to beg or steal, when he lost his place. The debtor was ordered to be sold, with his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made;[1] or, he was cast into prison, and delivered to the tormentors, till he paid all he owed. The long civil wars of the Hasmoneans, the devas-

[1] Matt. xviii. 25.

tations of the Parthians, called in to take sides in them, and the terrible exactions of the different leaders, in the civil wars of Rome, had covered the land with ruins, and left a state of things from which it never recovered. The whole world, indeed, had been exhausted in the awful struggle for supremacy, that had followed the death of Cæsar. Everywhere, the misery of the common people was terrible, through the oppression suffered from the Roman governors, whom Tiberius compared to flies on a wounded man, which had already sucked their fill, and which it was kinder to leave undisturbed, rather than bring fresh hungry swarms by driving them away.

In some neighbourhoods, in Christ's day, as now, clumps of fig or olive trees took the place of vineyards. The fig was a main article in His simple dietary, and the olive gave Him both light and nourishment; its very refuse serving as His fuel, for it throws off a great deal of heat in burning. A few of the richer peasants, then, as now, would boast of a yoke of small miserable cattle for their plough, but the goat was, no doubt, the favourite with the villager, as it is with his descendant, for there are few sheep in the hill country, which was the home of the Jews. Goats thrive better than either cattle or sheep, and can be turned out in all weathers, finding food, moreover, on the hills, where any other creature would be starved. But, even of the goats, many die, each winter, for want of food and care. In the higher parts of the country, peasants often, in winter, drive off their stock to lower and warmer districts, such as the Jordan valley; living in the open air by day, and seeking shelter in caves by night.

The climate of the Palestine hills is marked by great extremes, at different seasons. In summer, a heat of 95°

to 100° Fahr. is not uncommon, while, in winter, storms like blizzards sweep over them. All parts are, moreover, exposed to siroccos, but, as a whole, the climate is very good, requiring little fire or warm clothing. The cold of night, however, compared with the heat of the day, makes

View in Upper Galilee.

rheumatism very common. The soil of the maritime plain is, mainly, very fertile, rich, brown loam; that of the hills is poorer, and yields only light crops of the grain plants, but it is admirably adapted for the vine, the fig, the mulberry, and the olive. At present, very little of the sea-plains is cultivated, and even among the rich hills and glens of Ephraim and Galilee, the population is so small that

far the greater part of the land lies desolate. But in the days of Christ, the landscape must have been very different; the country having scant room for its teeming inhabitants. Yet the rich had already, in the days of Isaiah of Jerusalem,[1] seized a great part of the land, dispossessing large numbers of the former small owners, and we may be sure that greed and money had secured a still worse monopoly of it, in the centuries after the prophet. The peasant, who called forth such special sympathy from our Lord, must therefore have been poor indeed; only, at best, a slight remove from the degraded slave. But cruel slavery was very common; the word for slave occurring seventy-two times in the Gospels. Household slaves are often mentioned. In fact it is assumed that all rich men had numbers of them; the slaves even of the High Priest seeming to have been numerous, while field slaves are also shewn to have abounded.[2] What the lot of the majority of these was, we may imagine. No wonder the presence of so much misery around Him, stirred the great heart of the Son of Mary. With the rich, our Lord came very little in contact, but the weary and heavy laden drew to His side, by a natural instinct, as to their trusted friend.

For at least three years we see Him ceaselessly passing through the towns and villages, preaching the good news of the Kingdom of God, healing all kinds of diseases, comforting the crowds bowed down by the miseries of the times and the darkness of their spiritual outlook, binding up the bruised reed, and smoothing the footsteps of sorrow. The mass of the population must have been largely non-Jewish, for as I have said, no nation is ever extirpated by

[1] Isa. v. 8.
[2] Matt. viii. 9; xiii. 27; Luke xv. 22; xvii. 7; xxii. 50; John xviii. 26.

conquest, and as there had been many races, one after the other, in Palestine, each, in turn, merging more or less with those already in the land, the peasant of Christ's day, shunned by the Jew, as the coloured people in the United States are by the whites, must have been of very mingled blood. It would, assuredly, be incorrect to press Christ's saying, that He had come only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, so strictly, as to think of Him ignoring all but the Jewish part of the nation, for, in the country, there were few Jews; the race, then as now, preferring town life to rural, so that the multitudes who gathered round Him, if partly made up of the poor Jew who had lost caste by inevitable neglect of rabbinical prescriptions, must, still more largely, have consisted of the virtually heathen population. In all probability, these would be very much like the local peasantry of to-day; poor ignorant creatures, with virtually no religion, beyond that common to the higher instincts of all races, but full of superstition. To hang a rag on a sacred tree, or to trust in some spirit of the "high place" crowning the round hill top in every landscape, as the tomb or "Mukam" of some imaginary saint does to-day, would be nearly all his theology. A sect of the present time, the Metawileh, may, probably, be a not unfair picture of those with whom our Lord came habitually in contact. They sing, dance, and light lamps at their Mukams, observe the Moslem feasts, and refuse to eat with any but their own people. At the yearly festivals they kill sheep, and give part of the flesh to those poorer than themselves, and cakes to the children of their neighbours, and place flowers on the tombs. While moreover, like most Orientals, they shave the head, they resemble some of the ancient races of the land, in leaving a little

hair on the forehead and at the ears. The washing before prayers, which marks the Jew, has shrunk, in their case, into wiping or sponging themselves, but still, in that form, it is there. In their dances in honour of their saints, we see the circling motion, usual from the earliest ages among worshippers of the heavens, and still that of Mohammedan solemnities in Palestine ; but this is common, also, among all the fellahin. The popular ideas respecting the sheiks whose spirits haunt the Mukams, throw further light on the characteristics of the ancient peasantry, in the names assigned them; one being known as the rain-giver, and others, as, respectively, the inspired, the madman, the idiot, the protector, the just, the wise, the serpent charmer, the pilgrim, the champion, or some name similarly descriptive of the opinion entertained, of the special qualities or powers of these ghostly protectors. The local superstitions are, of course, endless. Christ must continually have encountered belief in incantations, for it still prevails, as does faith in charms, in divination by various means, in the power of the evil eye, and in evil spirits. It is still, indeed, a dangerous matter to require cleanliness in the mission schools—mothers thinking that the dirtiness of their children guards them from the blighting looks of any evil-disposed person ; and it must have been the same when our Lord went through the country, preaching and healing. As to evil spirits, they fill the air, the landscape, and even the solid earth, as innumerably as they were supposed to do by our ancestors in the Middle Ages. There are demons with shadowy forms, like the gigantic smoke-pillars of the wilderness whirlwind ; common ghosts in infinite variety; ghouls which haunt the burial grounds, and feed on the corpses; and goblins, and

the lord of the devils, known as Shaitan or Satan. It was with just such a peasantry Christ had to do; left in its ignorance by the rabbis, as sheep having no shepherd; their souls not being within hope of Paradise, since they did not know or practise the ritualism which then did duty for religion.

The villages through which Christ passed in His journeyings, were, no doubt, much the same as those of our day, for ages work no change in the East. They now consist of any number of square huts, from a score to a hundred, put up, here and there, out and in, with no pretence of regularity, though all are close together; built of mud-bricks, on the lowlands, or of stones brought from some ancient ruins; and of stones, on the hills, where these lie around in thousands. In Gaza and the south generally, low domes of stone are common, to cover the joining of the arch, which springs, below, from each corner. In the north, the roof is flat, and consists of mud, resting on branches, or layers of reeds, themselves supported by rough stems of trees, often far from straight. The mud covering, of course, soon becomes soaked, after heavy rain, but the danger of leaking is avoided by a frequent use of the roller. A very few cooking utensils, some sleeping mats, perhaps a chest for valuables, a small clay lamp or two, with a rag for wick, and in the better cottages a bank of mud along one side, spread, it may be, with a coverlet, are all one finds within. Chimneys are unknown, the door serving instead; helped, in some cases, by the slit which serves for an ever open window. The only light in many cabins is from the doorway, but this is of little moment in a climate where young and old pass most of their lives in the open air, and dwellings are chiefly of use by night, or during snatches of cold or bad weather.

Many houses, as I have already noticed, have the half of the floor, next the door, higher than the rest; the higher part being reserved for the family, while the lower is given up to the poultry or pigeons, overhead, and to the goats or sheep, and perhaps the ass, below. It was, very probably, some such arrangement that is meant, by our Lord being spoken of as born in a stable and cradled in a manger. There is, usually, at least one house of two stories in each village; the one being that of the sheik, who is the hereditary head of the little community, and exercises a very real authority.

In summer, the villagers sleep in booths on the house-tops for coolness. In a good many cases, rude, ill-kept enclosures of fig, pomegranate, or olive trees, fenced by hedges of prickly pear, are seen in the neighbourhood, and the top of the nearest round hill is, as I have said, generally crowned by a Mukam, conspicuous from its whitewashed dome. In the village itself, there is no attempt at neatness. The dust lies deep before the poor black huts of mud, often in bad repair, which serve the fellahin for homes. Through the day, the men are away on their patches of land, sometimes near, at others, far from the village; the children go out with the few sheep or goats their father may own, while the women and grown girls remain, to attend to what domestic affairs there may be in such a humble state of things, and to fetch water from the well. The journey to and from this, though a toil, is also the special pleasure of the day, if we may judge from the loud, cheerful volubility of the picturesque groups which gather at the well mouth, or walk to it, or home again, with their great earthenware jars rising from a pad on their head. It was, we may be sure, just the same in the

days of our Lord. Bread baked in thin round disks, by the women, in the clay ovens inside or outside each cabin, forms, with eggs, rice, and olives, the staple of the peasant's food. The bread, which has no leaven, is, however, when possible, dipped in oil, and grape-syrup or melted butter is also used, if it can be had. Melons, marrows, cucumbers, and other similar vegetables, are eaten in great numbers, but too many must be contented with a small share of such luxuries, living, as they can, on fare which barely supports life. Thus, I have seen people, in Egypt, pulling grass from the rude carts loaded with it, and eating what was only fit for sheep; and, in Palestine, I have seen women frequently picking all they thought eatable, from patches of green at the roadside or in enclosures. Poverty such as we can hardly realize, reigns widely in the East, and must have met our Saviour on every hand, for things were, if possible, even worse when He was among us. Sour milk is the great drink of Palestine, and is very nice, but a large proportion of the people have to be satisfied with water. In Christ's time, however, wine was much more abundant than now; though the culture of the vine by Christian races is widely extending. A sheepskin coat in cold weather, exchanged for a cotton or linen shirt in summer, or worn in addition, completes the wardrobe of the peasant for the year. Women of the humbler class, in the same way, have only a rather close-fitting sack, reaching to the feet. But, of course, there are many grades even in peasant life, and corresponding grades in dress. The turban, for example, proclaims at once the wearer's position; varying from extreme shabbiness to a proud display of white or coloured cotton, linen, woollen, or silk, wound round a red Turkish fez, inside which are one or more coverings, over a

white cotton skull-cap; the head being always shaved for coolness. On a journey, the peasant "girds up his loins"[1] by pulling the hanging skirt, which would impede him, between his legs, and fastening it to his waist-belt, leaving his limbs in great measure bare. His wide sleeves he often ties back behind his shoulders, exposing his arms. In the Gospels, to put anything into the bosom means into the open breast of the shirt, from which I have seen men take out figs to eat, or bread; for though the naked skin is one side of the pocket, the fellah has no objection to keeping his provisions in this primitive wallet. Shoes or sandals are rarely seen on the poorer classes. Of men thus dressed, and thus simple in life, the congregations of the Saviour were, no doubt, made up, with a few of a higher standing among them. Of such was the sower on his hillside patch, casting the grain from his seed-bag, in a wide sweep, as he slowly stalked on, looking wondrously grave, in his turban and white or blue gaberdine, with his bare feet, hidden at most, only in front, by rude sandals; his legs being bare half way up the calf. Such was the brown figure, astride his ass, without saddle; his light plough lying across the creature's shoulder, as the two jogged on, over the rough path, to the stony strip, the skin of which was to be scratched by the primitive implement; for almost all the soil in Palestine would be thought stony in most other lands. Such were the women, busy plucking up the weeds from among the growing corn, to carry them home, as fodder for the household ass or the sheep or two, in the stable-half of the cabin, or in the yard. Such were the villagers, lounging, in the evening, beside the well, or, at any hour, from early morning, on the flat roofs, or sitting

[1] 1 Kings xviii. 46.

on the ground, anywhere, in the street, for Orientals never stand to gossip, but squat down on their heels, in the middle of the road, or wherever they find themselves when they meet. He would often have to toil along the same rough paths as now run through the hill valleys, or over the white, bare, limestone hills, where, in the fierce summer heat, the gift of a cup of cold water would bring blessings to the giver, from the parched lips it cooled. Or His road might lie in the stony bed of a winter torrent, which is often the only one in long distances, and He would pass through the same narrow winding lanes, ankle deep in dust, that now serve as streets, in the high lying villages or little towns; for then, as now, the villages and towns of Palestine were nearly always on the top of heights, where there was greater security and more air. And in some humble mud or rough stone cabin, with its clay floor for seat, and for sleep by night, and its utter emptiness of all that we think even lowly comfort, the Saviour of the world would, habitually, for the time make his abode.

Note.—It may illustrate the Gospel times to quote some statistics and facts respecting the Palestine of to-day. In 1891 the exports were £400,000; the imports £288,000. The exports comprised, as the main articles, maize, soap, oranges, colocynth, hides, wheat, olive oil, sesame seed, wool, and bones. From Nablus chiefly, 4,250 tons of soap were exported, and the value of the oranges—270,000 boxes, sent off, was £108,000. The imports were cloth, coal, timber, rice, sugar, hardware, fancy goods, and spirits. Grain is exported almost solely from Gaza. A million of bushels, each, of wheat and barley, are thought to be sent off. Olive wood and mother-o'-pearl, from the Red Sea, are among the exports. Wine growing increases, in the hands of Jews and Germans. The Rothschilds are interested in this. The vines grown are from stocks imported from France and America by them. Many mulberry trees are being planted round Jaffa, for silkworms.

A friend tells me that one winter he lost his way, close to Jerusalem, in the deep snow, and I find in the Palestine Society Report, January, 1893, that five inches of rain are said to have fallen between Jaffa and Jerusalem, in twenty-four hours, in a recent storm.

As an item of a different kind, I note that Mr. Petrie regards the cubic foot used by the ancient races of the sea-plains, at 13.3 inches—which was the length of that used in Asia Minor.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE GREAT PHYSICIAN.

PALESTINE, as a whole, rejoices in a healthy climate. On the hills, especially, one breathes a pure, dry air. In the rainy season, indeed, there is sharp weather, and we meet frequent changes that are trying, but, on the other hand, from May till the beginning of November, the skies shine, day by day, with an almost too glorious brightness. Through this long period, rain is very rare, but though the heat of the day is great, it is tempered by the north-west wind, which blows, from over the sea, with great regularity, each day, from about eight or nine o'clock in the morning, to about ten at night; cooling the whole land. The nights, even in April, are often so cold that fire is agreeable, as Peter shewed, at the house of the High Priest;[1] but in summer they are, on the contrary, so warm, that one may sleep on the flat roofs, even though lightly clad. The soil of the country, which is of decomposed chalky limestone, bears a flora suited to such a dry surface, and marked by falling into dust when withered, and being blown away by the wind;[2] instead of mouldering into humus, as in lands more moist. With such a peculiarity, the soil does not readily absorb unsanitary elements, so that the population have been famous for their healthiness, even as long ago as the time of Tacitus.[3]

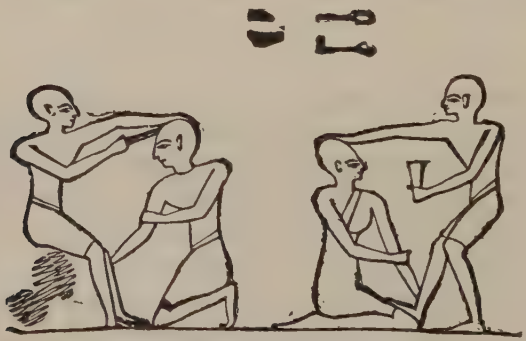
[1] Mark xiv. 54. [2] Ps. ciii. 16. [3] *Hist.*, v. 6.

All parts of the country, however, are not equally salubrious; as, for example, the wide marshy places on the plains of Acre and of Sharon; tracts under water during the rains, such as the plain of Battauf; and, above all, the deep-sunk tropical valley of the Jordan. Even on the hills and uplands, moreover, there are old towns round which the rubbish and abominations of centuries are heaped up, as at Jerusalem, where these accumulations are, at some points, a hundred feet deep. The rains of winter, soaking through these obscene depths, necessarily create very hurtful miasma in the great heat of summer. No place in Palestine, however, any more than elsewhere, is free from sickness and disease; and, hence, the Bible, which notices life from all sides, constantly brings before us allusions to local maladies. It speaks of skin diseases, fevers, ailments of the digestive organs, of the nervous system, mental diseases, troubles of the organs of the senses, and other afflictions. In the Gospels, especially, as the record of the "Great Physician," the maladies prevailing around Him are before us in every chapter. The ideas of the times, in reference to them, are, however, those of the age; for scientific medicine was then, of course, unknown. Hence it is frequently difficult, if not impossible, to decide what is exactly meant, since many quite different diseases are often very similar in their outward manifestations, at some stages of their development. Those named are deafness and dumbness, fever, palsy, leprosy, blindness, dropsy, epilepsy, issue of blood, the being bowed down, troubled or possessed by evil or unclean spirits or by devils, halt, withered, lame, or maimed. How many diseases are included in this list cannot be known; numbers which are now discriminated being spoken of vaguely, under a com-

mon name, in those old times. Hence it is impossible to know how many that are unnamed in the Gospels, are included in the expression more than once used of our Lord, that He "healed all manner of sicknesses, among the people." Diseases of hearing or speech do not seem exceptionally common in Palestine, but there are no such institutions as in Western lands, for either curing, or receiving, the deaf and dumb, or indeed, sufferers of any kind. Fevers have always been rife, especially in the low-lying parts of the country. Thus we find two notices of them in the sunken bed of the Lake of Galilee, which is nearly 700 feet below the level of the Mediterranean. Tiberias, the only place of any size now found on the shores of the lake, is very unhealthy in summer; its low position being aggravated by the air being kept from it by hills, a thousand feet high, rising behind it. Intermittent fevers are, hence, very common in the hot months, as are also agues, which are still called fevers by the population, and, doubtless, were included in the maladies of Christ's day.

Paralysis is a definite disease with us, but in the Gospels it is a name for many forms of muscular or nervous affection, resulting, as a class, in the more or less complete loss of vital power. Hence, such results, from gout or rheumatism, are included as forms of it, but it comprised also, the true paralysis of the nerves. Under this one name, moreover, antiquity grouped all suffering which involved contraction or relaxation of the muscles. As with us, it was reckoned complete, where feeling, as well as power of motion, was destroyed, and partial, where there was still feeling, though not the ability to use the member. Apoplexy was regarded as a sudden paralysis of the whole body.

Leprosy has in all ages been more or less prevalent in Palestine. At this day, there is always a group of sufferers from it, outside the gates of Jerusalem, begging from passers-by, and they are also to be seen outside Samaria. The great activity of the skin in so warm a climate as that of Palestine, the dirtiness of the people, partially excusable from the scarcity of water, and the countless variety of insect vermin, which excite the skin by their stings or by laying eggs under the epidermis, make it easily comprehen-



Egyptian Physicians and Patients.

sible how the population are so widely affected by skin diseases. All these seem to be included under the general name of leprosy, in the popular vocabulary of to-day, and were, we may believe, more or less so, in that of our Lord's time. Blindness has always been terribly common, except among the Bedouins; the desert seeming to be free from the predisposing causes, that are so disastrous in their results elsewhere. When in Egypt, I was much struck by the number of people blind in one or both eyes. In England, the proportion is one in a thousand, and it is the same in Norway, but in Egypt, one in a hundred is thus afflicted, or even,

according to some, one in twenty. In Palestine, it has been the same, from the earliest ages, as we see from the constant notices of blindness in the Bible. Our Lord must have been saddened by its prevalence wherever He went, for there is no gathering, in town or village, in which there are not some men wholly or partially sightless. I remember, at Shiloh, a small knot of peasants, chiefly boys and lads, who came to see my friend and myself, as strangers, had several among them thus affected; ulcers on the cornea eating away the sight, without anything being done to arrest the calamity. Indeed, there was no one to tell them what should be done, for, as in Christ's day, they were sheep having no shepherd. The chief cause of this misery is the cold of the night, after excessive heat through the day. But the heat and the dust, of themselves, would not be thus fatal, though the dirtiness of the people has, no doubt, much to do with it; the laziness and stupidity of the parents, and, still more, their superstitious fear of the doctor, intensifies all symptoms.

I remember seeing a baby, at Thebes, in its mother's arms, with a fringe of flies feeding on the edges of its eyelids, without an attempt, on the part of the poor little thing, to remove them, even by a wink. Yet their feet and their probosces were, very probably, fresh from some ophthalmic eye; thus carrying infection wherever they alighted. The dread of "the evil eye" has much to do with this apparent want of motherly care, for the more repulsive the child, the safer it is thought from this peril. A lady in Cairo, indeed, told me she nearly broke up her mission school, by requiring the little ones to wash their faces and hands. No wonder that the fame of Christ, as the restorer of sight, should have brought round Him, day by day, poor blind

creatures, to ask Him to heal them. A hakim, or physician, is venerated in the East, and Christ was one endowed with miraculous powers. Hence, far more than from any religious wants, great crowds followed Him, and thronged the house in which He might be resting for the time, bringing to Him all their sick friends and neighbours, that He might cure them. So great, indeed, is the craving for the rare aid of a hakim, all over the East, that Mrs. Bishop, the famous traveller, told me her having attended the London hospitals before she began her amazing journeys, gave her such a fame, through the knowledge of the healing art she had acquired, that she felt quite safe even among the roughest peoples: the idea of offering any violence or even want of courtesy to a "healer," being inconceivable. We can thus see why Christ was so popular with the multitude, and why, among other reasons, the common people heard Him gladly.[1] The same ignorance and want of medical help, which leads to so much blindness, heightens the sufferings of the "halt" and the "lame" among Orientals, beyond what any one living in Christian countries can imagine. Without hospitals, as well as without intelligent care, deformity assumes forms of indescribable hideousness.

The unthinking heartlessness of mill-owners in the early days of Lord Shaftesbury, when he described a crowd of Lancashire factory children, gathered for him in the market-place of a cotton town, as like so many distorted letters of the alphabet, is the only parallel to what similar insensibility shews in every part of Palestine, to-day. Nor could it have been different, when Christ was journeying through

[1] The blind are mentioned twenty-four times in the Old Testament, and twenty-two times in the Gospels. See, besides, any Concordance.

the hills and valleys of His native land. His soul must have been harrowed by the sight of objects, on which no tender heart could look without the keenest distress. The woman bowed down for eighteen years[1] was, doubtless, a victim of the violent rheumatism so common over the East, as the result of the sudden and great variations of temperature; summer being as hot as winter is, frequently, cold, and night and day forming at most times an extreme contrast. Jacob was no exception to others, when he spoke of being consumed by the drought in the day, and by the frost in the night;[2] the poor protection from the cold, alike in the house and in the open air, inviting inflammatory attacks. When at Lake Huleh, in the north of Palestine, a case of dropsy such as must often have been met by our Lord,[3] came before me. A few sick people had been made happy, the night before, by a drop or two from some medicines I had with me, and the news had run ahead of us, for the tents were hardly pitched when the sick began to gather to them. Among others, was a poor man, ill of the dropsy, who came, with his wife, mother, and child, to see if he could get any relief. My companion, an army surgeon, fortunately had his instrument with him, and tapped the poor creature; a stream of water flowing, forthwith, from his swollen stomach, the seat of the disease. The look of gratitude at the relief afforded was unspeakably touching, and equally so was that of his little brown wife. Standing upright seemed, at last, not sufficient, so he went down on his knees, to let the water run out to the end.

The villages, consisting often of a few miserable cabins, stuck down in no order, with a lane, a yard or two broad, for the street; with the walls of mud, sometimes mixed

[1] Luke xiii. 10-21. [2] Gen. xxxi. 40. [3] Luke xiv. 2.

with loose stones; the whole structure only a few feet square; the flat roof, as I have said, a thick layer of mud, supported on some crooked poles, entirely untrimmed, and covered with a thick bed of stalks of maize, stems of reeds, branches of the stunted growths of the hillsides, weeds or grass, or a medley of them all, make homes so wretched, so dark, so dirty beyond belief, for they have no bed except the clay floor, and no provision for pure water; nothing indeed to give ease, comfort, or needed protection from the weather; that it is no wonder they sent their population out to a passing Englishman, to see if he could be of any use in their multiplied ailments. Just so, I thought, when the poor folks crowded to my tent, "At even, when the sun did set, they brought unto Christ all that were diseased; . . . and all the city was gathered together at the door, and He healed many that were sick of divers diseases."[1] The dirty water used for all purposes is the worst sanitary evil of the East, for the free life in the open air, common to every part, counteracts much else that is unhealthy. Drinking water, however, is a different matter. There are ponds of rain water beside most villages; pools formed by low mounds of mud, and, perhaps, a slight excavation. In these, the water collected during the winter rains, is preserved, for every purpose, till there is none left. The goats and other creatures go to it; women wash their sordid household rags in it; naked children bathe in it; the dust blows into it; and the water for cooking and drinking is taken from it. I need hardly say that such a pool is exactly like one of our horse-ponds, and, in fact, passing horses do constantly walk into it, to drink. So it was, one cannot doubt, in Christ's day.

[1] Matt. viii. 16; Mark i. 32.

In Mr. Morrison's delightful "Life of St. Bernard" he tells us that "the men of that time believed that the air swarmed with angels; and, if not with angels, then with devils. They believed that fearful and perpetual strife was being waged between the adverse hosts—that armies of good and evil spirits were for ever on the wing—that they encamped in invisible companies to waylay and deceive, or counsel and succour, the sons of men. They believed that they heard the laughter of the fiends borne on the night-gusts of the moaning wind, and gradually retiring before the chorus-song of rejoicing angels, swelling up in the morning air. They believed that all evil thoughts were whispered in the ear, by the emissaries of the old enemy of man's soul, and that nothing but prayer, faith, and the help of the blessed saints, would avail to avert or dispel them."[1] It was substantially the same in the days of our Lord, except that, for prayer to God, we might substitute exorcisms; for faith, magic spells and rites; and for the help of saints, the invocation of the secret names of angels. It is very hard, therefore, to know when the language used in the Gospels is meant to convey only the popular idea of the day, and when it is to be more strictly taken. For it is entirely reasonable to believe that, in some low social and moral conditions of human society, the interference of evil spirits in the affairs of mankind may be much more pronounced than at others. We are so absolutely ignorant of the relations of the spirit-world to humanity, that it is presumptuous to dogmatize on a subject so mysterious. In the Gospels and Epistles, the most various phenomena, alike in the moral and physical world, are attributed to evil spirits. They are said to cause dumbness; to "vex"

[1] Morrison's *St. Bernard*, 66.

some persons "grievously," it is not said whether in mind or body; to cause epilepsy, madness, temptations to evil thoughts and acts; to take away good thoughts; to drive their victims, in paroxysms of insanity, into the desert; to take away the "word" from the heart; to bind and bow down a woman for eighteen years; to instigate to lying, and all crimes; to hinder an apostle from taking journeys he intended; to send a "thorn in the flesh" to "buffet" St. Paul; to enter into the lower animals; to have made the Baptist lead his ascetic life; to take possession of the bodies of men and women, sometimes singly, but in two instances to the number of seven, and in another, in a crowd described as a "legion;" to cause blindness; and, in short, to be the active agents in every form of mental, physical, or moral evil that affects humanity. A great part of Christ's healing beneficence is, hence, said to have been devoted to "casting out devils." These are habitually spoken of as unclean, and they are represented as under a prince, to whom the Jews had transferred the name of the chief local idol of Ekron, Beelzebub, the Fly-god.[1] It may be seen from this ghastly catalogue, how full the land was in Christ's day, of every form of suffering of all kinds, ghostly and bodily, and we may realize how grateful the appearance must have been, of one who could cast out devils by a word, and heal all manner of sicknesses and diseases as easily.

The contrast between the efficacious word, or touch, of Jesus, and the ways of the local "physicians" of the day, must have heightened His popularity with the multitude. The woman who had "suffered many things of many

[1] Matt. iv. 10; ix. 32; xv. 22; xvi. 23; xvii. 18; Mark iv. 15; v. 15; Luke iv. 33; vii. 33; viii. 2, 12, 26, 30; xi. 26; xiii. 16; John vi. 70; viii. 44; Acts v. 2; 1 Cor. v. 5; 2 Cor. xi. 14; xii. 7; Eph. iv. 27; 1 Thess. ii. 18; 1 Tim. i. 20; iii. 6.

physicians"[1] could have been by no means a solitary victim, since, amidst so much ignorant empiricism, her experience must have been that of many more. That the towns and large villages of the day must have had numerous professors of the healing art, is implied in the mention of the woman's troubles, and their skill may, perhaps, be fairly estimated by the opinion of the Talmud, that "the best of physicians deserves hell, and the most respectable of them is a brother of impious Amalek."[2] The gloss on this fierce denunciation is still more fierce. "The physician stupidly kills many, whom he might have saved had he been skilful: he lets many poor die, whom he might have restored, had he given them what they needed; he lets many sick persons eat and drink as if they were well, thus increasing their maladies, till they die of them; he turns many, from hope in God, to trust in himself." Josephus tells us that roots, medicinal stones, and the power of the secret names of angels, were relied on for cures.[3] Magic spells, attributed to Solomon, were in great vogue. "He left behind him," says the Jewish historian, "forms of exorcisms, by which people drive away demons so that they never return: and this method of cure is of very great value to this day; for I have seen a Jew named Eleazar curing people possessed by demons, in the presence of Vespasian and his sons and captains, and the whole of his soldiers. He put a ring that had, under its seal, a root mentioned by Solomon, to the nostrils of the demoniac, and then drew the demon out through his nostrils, as he smelt it: and when the man fell down immediately, he adjured the demon to return into him no more, still making mention of Solomon, and reciting the incantations that

[1] Mark v. 26. [2] Buxtorff, Lex. Chald., 278. [3] *Bell. Jud.*, ii. 8, 6, 7.

king had composed. Moreover, wishing to prove to the spectators that he had such a power, he set a cup, or basin, full of water, a little way off, and commanded the demon, as he went out of the man, to overturn it, and thus shew that he had really left the man. And when this was actually done, the skill and wisdom of Solomon were shewn very manifestly."[1]

That Josephus should have believed all this, throws a strong light on the ideas of the people at large, in our Lord's day. Apart from magic, the elementary medicine of the times was mainly occupied with outward injuries. Wounds were cleansed; pressed, to remove foreign matters; softened with oil, and bound up.[2] Wine and oil were also used together.[3] Oil, indeed, was apparently very much employed for healing, since it was used by the apostles, when sent out by Christ, and St. James directs that the sick be anointed with oil, in the name of the Lord; though it is added, that the cure is effected by the prayer of faith which followed.[4] Balsam from Gilead is, also, mentioned, and the leaves of trees are referred to by Ezekiel, as part of the pharmacopœia.[5] A plaster of figs was prescribed for Hezekiah's carbuncle, and fish gall was used for eye affections.[6] Honey, which is still much esteemed in the East, for its healing powers, was another article used by the Hebrews for its medicinal virtues.[7] Warm baths, such as those of Callirhoë, and Tiberias, were also used. Especial attention had been paid to the characteristics of leprosy at an early period, but we are not

[1] *Ant.*, viii. 2, 5.
[2] 2 Kings viii. 29; ix. 15; Isa. i. 6; Ezek. xxx. 21.
[3] Luke x. 34.
[4] Mark vi. 13; James v. 14.
[5] Jer. xlvi. 11; li. 8; Ezek. xlvii. 12.
[6] 2 Kings xx. 7; Isa. xxxviii. 21; Tob. xi. 13–15.
[7] Prov. xvi. 24.

told what the cure employed may have been.[1] The priests were required to certify the cleansing of any one from the disease, but neither in reference to it, nor to other ailments, were they the actual physicians.[2] Every village had its own hakim, but the horrid sanitary condition of Eastern towns and villages, even now, in itself tells how wretched their professional ideas must have been. To lay his hand on the troubled part, is a much valued prescription of the modern Oriental healer, and it was, no doubt, the same two thousand years ago. A sick man will still betake himself to a dervish or a mollah, to be cured by his prayers, magic formulas, amulets, and talismans, or to a hakim, whose ignorance and want of all fitness invite death rather than restoration. A morsel of the Koran handed to the sick person, is trusted as a potent medicine. To suggest ordinary cleanliness, however, does not occur to the Oriental "physician." Christ, we may be sure, often saw, what is now met continually; people so filthy, and living in such indescribable dirt, that the wonder is they continued to live at all.

Think, for example, of a two-story hovel of mud, I entered, of which the lower floor was a stable, tenanted by a calf and some goats; one room, up the outside stair, being all the sleeping accommodation there was for the family of six or seven persons. Below, a fire of weeds or other rubbish was burning on the clay floor; a hen and chickens were in a coop, kids played about, and a number of pigeons nestled in broken earthenware jars. Our use of the broom is unknown in the East, and dirt of every kind, alive with unmentionable insect vermin of many kinds, covers not only the floor but the whole interior. Such

[1] Lev. xiii. ff. [2] Luke xvii. 14.

indeed is a very common experience, in the East. To pick the vermin off one's clothes is a regular Oriental amusement. All this must be remembered, if we are to realize the daily life of our Lord, with all its innumerable self-denials and humiliations. At times, He may have come into contact with the richer classes, but, as a rule, His daily intercourse was with the multitude, who were then, there can be no question, just what their descendants are to-day; sober, good-natured, kind to their beasts, not without deep religious feeling, brave, bright, ready to learn from those they trust, shewing a natural dignity, courtesy, and modesty, that are very attractive, but, among themselves, revoltingly immoral, unspeakably dirty, greedy of money beyond measure, insolent, at times, to strangers apparently unable to help themselves, and, above all, liars in the grain. "A lie," they say, "is the salt of a man," and to be able to lie dexterously makes a man quite a hero. Yet love, here, as always, won its triumphs, for "the common people," we are told, heard Christ gladly. They saw that He was their friend; they rejoiced in His seeking such poor lost beings as they felt themselves; and seeing Him taking on Himself their infirmities, and bearing their sicknesses, this great love begat love in return.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE WORLD AS CHRIST SAW IT.

CHRIST lived in the age of city and town life, which had followed the introduction of peace over the wide Roman empire, by the accession of Augustus. The Greek dominion in Asia had risen from its hold on these centres of population and influence, rather than on the scattered population of the country districts, and that of Rome had the same characteristic. But the dreadful ruin of the long civil wars had wasted land after land, and had left them covered with the silent wreck of once prosperous communities, and to rebuild and restore these became the universal task, when the accession of Augustus promised a peaceful future. Roman provinces, like Greek, were essentially municipal, and, hence, it was rather necessary to rebuild the old towns and cities, in what had been the Macedonian empire in the East, than to found new ones. Greek influence, indeed, was all-powerful in Syria; the special seat of Greek domination. Many colonies of Greek veterans and civilians were settled over its various districts, to bind East and West together, and thus Syria had become a new and grander Macedonia; the choice spirits among the conquering race making it their permanent home. The majority of the towns received Greek names; the coins, even of outside states, bore Greek legends; most of those of Tyre, for example, having this characteristic.

Over all Roman Syria, which extended from the south of Cappadocia, on the north, to the borders of Egypt, on the south, and thus included Palestine, Greek became the exclusive language of commerce and polite society; the native Aramæan continuing that of the open country and the humbler classes. It was much the same, indeed, as with English and Welsh in Wales, or English and Gaelic in Scotland, or old Celtic in Brittany. Aramaic remained, however, the language of ordinary intercourse. The old names of places were mostly retained, but they were modified by Greek forms, and, even now, those in use are of Aramaic origin, rather than from the Greek. Syrian heathenism, in the same way, might take new Greek names for its gods, but it retained the local ones as well, and clung tenaciously to the native gods. In Christ's day, in fact, Syrian heathenism was very vigorous, and continued long to be so influential, that, in the beginning of the third century, the grandmother of the boy, raised, at the age of fourteen, to the imperial throne, through his mother's marriage into the line of Severus—not content that the lad should be the supreme priest—Pontifex Maximus—of Rome, made him assume, before all Roman titles, the one he held as great high priest of the Syrian Sun-god—Heliogabalus. The Romans had conquered Syria, but the Roman gods were driven out of the field, even in their own home, by their Syrian rivals.

Round the borders of the small Jewish territory, in Palestine, the same honour of the Syrian gods must often have been sighed over by Jesus. At Gaza, which He may have visited when on His mission journeys in the south, a statue of the god Marnas has been dug up in recent years. He was worshipped there, as late as A.D. 500, and

we hear of the worship of Venus, at Ascalon and Acre, down to the same period. Tammuz had a grove at Bethlehem, in the fourth century, and human sacrifice is said to survive, to this time, among some sects in Northern Syria, who have stone altars, in sacred groves, like the altars of the ancient Druids of Britain. An image of the goddess Atargatis has also been found at Ascalon, where she was the local divinity, as the consort of Dagon. She was the same as Derceto, or Venus, and was revered by the women long after Christ's day. The light frivolity and profound immorality of Syria, must have affected the population with which our Lord came in contact. Even the people of the Syrian capital, Antioch, were held by the thoughtful, an uncultivated, half barbarous community. The theatres and the games were their highest conception of art. Musical performances, dances, combats of wild beasts and of gladiators, were their delight. Everywhere the chief jockeys, circus and dramatic celebrities, hailed from Syria. Conjurers and clowns, ballet dancers and dealers in magic, or, as we might say, sorcerers, flocked from the Orontes to Rome. So eager were the people in their love of the theatre, that, in the year A.D. 260, the population of Antioch were crowded together to watch the actors, when the Persians appeared to attack the city, and rained arrows from the hill above, into the dense masses of the sightseers. At Gaza, as late as the end of the fourth century, the horses of a zealous heathen and of a zealous Christian being competitors in the races of the town, and the beasts of the Christian winning, a number of heathen allowed themselves to be baptized; the issue of the race seeming to them to shew that Christ was greater than their famous god Marnas.

As to morals, the Roman satirists often bewail the corruption of the West by the foulness of the East. The wealth of the soil, and the profits of the great transit trade between East and West, were, meanwhile, covering the land with new towns, cities, and temples, among which were the amazing splendours of the temples at Baalbek, the monuments of the local glory of Syria one hundred years after Christ. In the length of a hundred, or a hundred and twenty-five miles, along the richly fertile banks of the Orontes, are still seen the ruins of about a hundred towns and cities, displaying the remains of whole streets of massive stone houses and public buildings; many of the houses surrounded with pillared halls, and adorned with galleries and balconies; with richly carved windows and doorways; gardens and baths; the ground floor of farm houses and stables; besides wine and oil presses, hewn out in the rocks, which also shew multitudes of costly tombs, with chambers revealing numerous sarcophagi, often elaborately sculptured.

From this, we may picture to ourselves the appearance of many landscapes familiar to Christ. The common people might be miserable enough, but not a few enjoyed a very full measure of the good things of life. Places, now far off in the desert, shew signs of high prosperity in these Roman days; grand aqueducts, walled terraces, and huge mounds hiding the ruins of once splendid towns. I had forgotten to speak of the local manufactures that so materially contributed to all this wealth; the linen, the purple, the silk, the glass. Weaving in flax had early been introduced from Babylon to Syria, and was very prosperous. Bethshean on the Jordan, below Esdraelon, well known, we may be sure, to Christ, was famous, among other places, for linen, and

exported its webs to every country. The purple of Tyre held the first rank, but there were also famous purple dye-works at Sarepta, Dora, and Cæsarea, and at Lydda and Neapolis, that is, Shechem. Raw silk was brought from China, by way of the Caspian, and was woven, for the most part, at Beirout and Tyre. The glass works of Sidon retained their ancient celebrity, and have left many examples in our museums, of the work of Christ's day; the stamp of the manufacturer still speaking for its age. The linen and silks of Syria, exported in great quantities to the Euphrates, were balanced by an equally extensive importation of Oriental manufactures, such as leather goods, and furs of all kinds, salves, spices, and slaves; huge caravans, laden with these and other wares, thronging the roads along which Christ often journeyed, as they were being taken to the Phœnician ports, on their way to Italy and the West.

In His daily life Jesus came in contact, in the towns and villages of Palestine, with most of the trades and callings which we find among ourselves. Stonecutters were busy squaring the blocks for the great man's house, or the public buildings which were always in progress somewhere. Tiberias had, indeed, been created during His early manhood, and must have made the sight of bands of bricklayers, masons, plasterers, carpenters, decorators, and mechanics of many kinds, familiar, though even villages could boast of some fine houses, as they do now. At Tiberias the stones might be brought in boats, but, as a rule, over the country, they would be transported on camels, as one sees in the neighbourhood of any ancient ruins, to-day. The masons, I suppose, sat while at work, as they do at this time; their turbans on their shaved heads, and blue smocks for their one garment; their legs and arms bare. Brick-

makers were busy here and there, as He passed, shaping their bricks in moulds, after mixing the mud of which they consisted with chopped straw, as their forefathers had done in Egypt ; using this binding material, indeed, even where clay was used, for burnt bricks of a better kind.

The Romans, no doubt, in this as in other things, had greatly improved the old Hebrew manufactures. The camel-hair cloth John wore may have been woven at Gaza, where I saw weavers busy making it, on primitive looms, at which they sat, on the clay floor of their wretched homes, the only light coming in from the door ; the beam of their looms much the same, we may suppose, as when the huge shaft of Goliath's spear was compared to one.[1] But, as we have seen, coarse cloth was not the only product of the loom in those days, though it was made in many varieties ; some of it of mixed camel and goat hair, for mourning, girdles, and tent-cloth, for which, however, the black hair of he-goats was most used, as it is still among the Arabs. But Christ could speak of the soft clothing and long flowing robes of the rich ; whether members of high society in Jerusalem, or gorgeous courtiers passing to or from Tiberias, He does not say. Already, in the days of Amos, the wealthy lay on couches of damask, and the robes of the Tyrian princess, married to the King of Israel, were threaded with gold, while grand curtains and hangings, and magnificent carpets, were to be seen in the Temple, and in the mansions of the rich, which, however, Christ seldom entered. Most of these were, no doubt, brought from Tyre or the Euphrates, but it is hard to think that the enterprise of Palestine itself was allowed to sleep, in such an age, in the production of the luxuries of commerce.

[1] 1 Sam. xvii. 7.

Weaving, however, was to a large extent left to the women, as was also spinning, whether for household use or for sale, though, as we have seen, men "wrought fine linen." Often, no doubt, had Christ seen, as are constantly seen still, in Sicily, the women with their spindles, throwing out the twining flax from the elevation of their flat roofs, and drawing up the thread before it reached the ground. Flax grew luxuriantly in Palestine,[1] and Proverbs honours the good wife for seeking wool and flax, and working them with her own hands.[2] The dress of the priests was of linen; the outer robe of the High Priest being a wonder of skill, as it was woven, throughout, in one piece; a peculiarity marking that of our Lord, also.[3] Flax was also used for lamp wicks, of which Jesus was thinking when He said that He would not quench the smoking flax.[4] The faintest sign of good would be cherished, and, if possible, fanned into a flame by Him. He would see the flax stems, peeled and split, lying in water, to separate the pulp, and afterwards hackled with wooden combs; the finer fibres to be spun into yarn, for linen; the coarser, to be twisted into cord and string, for nets and snares. As He entered Jerusalem, and at many other places, He would pass fullers, dressing new webs or cleansing old garments, with lye, natron, wood-ashes, or fuller's earth; their "field" always outside a town, which its presence would have Levitically defiled. Linen was made so white by them, that it was the only thing of which the Evangelists could think, among any works of man, to which to compare the transcendent splendour of the heavenly robes at the Transfiguration.

The notices in the Gospels of things around Christ in

[1] Hos. ii. 9. [2] Prov. xxxi. 13.
[3] Exod. xxxix. 22, 23; John xix. 23; Jos., *Ant.*, iii. 7, 4. [4] Matt. xii. 20.

His daily life are full of interest, as filling-in the picture of His everyday experience. The smell of incense such as Zechariah offered, would be familiar to Him, from His visits to the Temple; the wine and strong drink from which John was to abstain, were seen everywhere, for

Egyptian Women Spinning and Weaving.

wine was in universal use, and the beer of Palestine had been famous for ages, even in Egypt, to which it was largely exported. The "writing-table" on which John's father wrote his son's name, was the single or double tablet of thin wood, which, when waxed over, could be written upon with a metal point. Writing, and, we may presume, reading, were, apparently, very general among all classes of the

Jewish population in our Lord's day, for we hear of Joseph thinking of giving Mary a written divorce; though he might have intended to get one of the public letter-writers, who, doubtless, then, as now, were to be found in the bazaar of every town, to write it for him. There were, moreover, copyists of the Sacred Rolls or Books, but they were a special class of men devoted to that occupation. The three-yard long, and six-inch broad, strips of "swaddling-clothes" in which He had, Himself, been wrapped at Bethlehem, were the mummy-case of all the babies round Him. The shepherds who paid Him homage in the rough manger were just such as wandered, with their sheep and goats, over every hill; poor men, dressed in a single blue sack reaching to the knees, or, in cold weather, in a rough overcoat of coarse woollen, or a sheepskin; their shaven heads protected by cotton or woollen stuff twisted round closely fitting skull-caps. Most of them, we may suppose, were the owners of the small flocks they tended, but not a few would be only "hirelings."

In the courts of the Temple, and on the Mount of Olives, and perhaps elsewhere, Christ saw, often, the "sellers of doves," for such offerings, amongst others, as Mary made when she took Him, as a babe, to the Temple, for her churching, while every clump of figs or olives, round the villages of the land, would greet Him with the wailing or cooing of these gentle birds. The common pigeon was, then, as now, to be met everywhere. A house must have been very poor, indeed, if it had none, flying out by the door, from the earthenware nests fixed on the back wall, or built into it; while, beside the few better houses, He would daily pass the dovecots of mud or brick, lined inside with similar nests; for a dovecot has always been a sign of a

man's being in some measure well-to-do, which is never wanting, if it can be had. How often must Christ have recalled, in such circumstances, one or other of the texts, numbering over fifty, in which doves are mentioned in the Bible! They were the only bird that could be offered in His Father's house. The leper presented them at his purification; the Nazarite, when he had by chance "defiled" himself; and poor mothers, like Mary, when they came abroad again, after the birth of their child. He would remember that, so long ago as Abraham's time, the patriarch had offered both the dove and the pigeon, and He may often have applied to Himself, in His communion with His Father above, the words of the Psalmist: "O deliver not the soul of Thy turtle dove unto the multitude of the wicked." How natural that, with such a sweet emblem of trusting innocence, on every hand, he should have warned His disciples to be "harmless as doves."

The "sword" which, his mother would tell Him, was predicted by Simeon, as destined, by His sorrows, to pierce through her soul, would be only too frequent a sight to Him, for, as I have said, Roman troops, chiefly of corps raised in Palestine itself—as, in India, the British army is mainly composed of regiments of native levies—were stationed at Cæsarea, Samaria, Jerusalem, Tiberias, Capernaum, Jericho, and elsewhere, and must, besides, have often been moving from one place to another. He had seen them at the Jordan, in the crowds attending John's preaching; the trumpets and band music of the cohort stationed in Antonia, on the edge of the Temple grounds, were familiar sounds, as often as He was at Jerusalem; the centurion at Capernaum had soldiers under him, whom Christ saw day by day; and He was to have only too bitter

an experience of the legionaries of Pilate, in His closing hours. The gold, frankincense, and myrrh, offered to Him as He lay on Mary's knees, came often before Him in later life. He would see the gold in coins of the day, and in the trinkets of the stalls in the bazaars. The odours of frankincense rose from the Temple altar, as part of many offerings; and wine mingled with myrrh was handed to Him when He was on the cross, while His mangled body was wrapped in cloths strewn with a thick layer of spices, of which myrrh was one. Labourers making "straight" the paths, in the rough beds of winter torrents, or down the steep slopes of the hills, before some great personage, and smoothing his way by moving loose stones to the side, and filling up the gaps torn by the winter storms, must often have been passed by Him; and every landscape, in the proper season, would shew others, toiling in the field with the light plough, or sowing their different crops, or putting the axe to the root of dead or barren fruit-trees which were to be cut down, or binding the tares in bundles to burn them, or sitting in the harvest field, as they swept down the barley or wheat with their toothed sickles, or waiting in the market-place till they were hired, or bearing the heat and burden of the day in the vineyard, or digging round some fig-tree in the garden, and laying manure at its root, to see, if, after all, it would bear fruit and not need to be cut down, or digging in some field for hidden treasures, buried in the wild times of the past, or bending under the great loads, to which He compared the "heavy burdens" laid on His fellow-countrymen by the traditions of the elders and the prescriptions of the rabbis; or in countless other ways appealing to His loving heart, as He saw them "weary and heavy laden." John's service as a

"messenger," to "prepare the way before Him," would be constantly recalled by the running footmen, who, then, as now, sped with untiring zeal before some great one, to clear the way, as Elijah did before Ahab, when he wished to honour him, or as runners hurry, at this day, before the equipage of Cairo magnates, or as fifty men ran before the chariot of Absalom when he played the king, and before that of Adonijah, a few years later.[1]

The "leathern girdle" of the Baptist, a poor strap round the waist, to keep the blue shirt of the shepherd and of the humble classes, generally, to their bodies, was, no doubt, like that worn by Christ Himself most of His life. In the lining of this, the peasant carries any money he may by a rare chance boast; and thus the apostles were told, when sent out penniless, that they were to take no money in their girdles.[2] Christ, knowing the old scriptures as He did, would remember that Elijah wore such a leather belt, and that Jeremiah had one of linen.[3] In the towns, however, He would see costly sashes round the waists of the rich, for Orientals, in all ages, have been given to finery, where they could get it, so that, if the multitude, everywhere, were limited to a poor linen smock, the townsfolk flaunted in fine under-linen and various light jackets, and vests, or outer robes of fine cotton or silk, under another of cloth, giving their dress a tulip-like brightness of different colours. A grand girdle completed the glory of such personages; their brass or silver pen-and-ink case stuck in it; their feet adorned with bright coloured slippers, and their heads, always shaved, protected and set off by a turban of snowy cotton, twisted round any number of skull-caps.

[1] 2 Sam. xv. 1; 1 Kings i. 5.
[2] Mark vi. 8, Greek.
[3] 2 Kings i. 8; Jer. xiii. 1.

In the bazaars, He would see men offering cooked locusts for sale, reminding Him, once more, of John, for not only the Arabs but the poor, generally, buy and eat scalded or fried locusts. The monks who, in the Middle Ages, thought such food unworthy of the Baptist, and fancied he lived on the pods of the carob tree—the fare of the swine tended by the Prodigal and, in the end, his own food—made a mistake, though they called them St. John's bread, and gave the tree his name. Wild honey, brought in for sale from the wild parts of the country, was, of old, as now, to be seen constantly in the bazaars. The axe, of which John speaks, and many other simple tools, were familiar to Christ, for had He not daily used it and the hatchet, the gouge, the compasses, the saw, the plumb-line, the level, and the red chalk for marking, when at work with Joseph, through long years, at Nazareth ?[1]

At Nazareth, too, on the threshing-floor, which, then, as now, was in the little valley under the town, He, year by year, saw grain come in from the patches of the villagers, farther down the valley, or from the hill-slopes round, or from the rich dark soil of Esdraelon, south of the Nazareth hills. Camels and asses bore it in great loads, and Christ perhaps often helped the owners to lay it out, round the circle of the threshing-floor, to be trampled by oxen till the ears were empty, or pressed out by the threshing sledge, drawn round and round by them ; the stones in the bottom tearing the straw into teben, for fodder, as well as beating out the grain. Not seldom, one may fancy, He had assisted to toss the crushed straw into the middle of the floor, while the wind swept the chaff far away ; a wooden fork, the "fan" of the Baptist, His

[1] 2 Kings xxi. 13 ; Isa. x. 15 ; xxviii. 17 ; xliv. 13.

implement; or to clean the grain by the yard-broad sieve, with its hair or palm fibre bottom; that sieve of which He spoke, when He warned Peter that Satan desired to sift him as wheat.[1] The Baptist's words respecting Himself would rise at every sight of a threshing-floor: "Whose fan is in his hand, and He will thoroughly cleanse His floor, and He will gather the wheat into the garner, but the chaff He will burn up with unquenchable fire."[2] The chaff and broken straw unavoidably left on the floor, when all else has been carried off, is, now, as then, swept together and burnt, to get rid of it; the smoking heap a vivid remembrance of the awful words! The "garners," of which both John and Christ speak, were very different from ours, being, in many cases, underground cistern-like pits, as we still see in the country near Gerar, though, more frequently, grain was stored in greater or smaller corn-bins, made, like the peasants' houses themselves, of mud, and running along the walls of the yard, as was, apparently, the case in the humble "palace" of the peasant king Ishbosheth, the son of Saul.[3] But in Christ's day, Western progress may have introduced barns, in our sense, here and there. The humility of John, we are told, thought even the slave's office, of loosening the "shoe-latchet" of our Lord, too great an honour for him, but Eastern shoes have no strings, and are rather slippers than shoes in our sense, so that the strings of sandals are really meant. The Jews, we may suppose, like Orientals now, wore very loose foot coverings when not on a journey, and, thus, sandals were most in vogue. On entering the houses, Jesus would take off His shoes, or sandals, for prayer might have been offered in any part of a dwelling, and that made

[1] Luke xxii. 31. [2] Matt. iii. 12 (R. V.); Luke iii. 17. [3] 2 Sam. iv. 5, 6.

the spot holy. At meals, also, He would appear to have removed His shoes or sandals, for the Hebrews are told, in Exodus, to eat the Passover with the shoes on their feet, as if this were contrary to their custom. Indeed, it seems implied that it was so, and that Jesus and His countrymen ate with their feet bare, from His reproach to the Pharisee for not having made a servant wash His feet, as hospitality demanded, and by the woman who anointed them, as He

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lay on the table-couch, being able to do so without disturbing Him, for, in the East, stockings are unknown, and if there were no sandals, the feet could be cared for without hindrance. That it was thus with Christ is, moreover, apparently confirmed by the fact that, even now, men put aside their shoes or sandals before meals. The poverty impressed, alike by the Baptist and our Lord, on their followers, is strikingly shewn in John's telling those who had a second peasant's shirt-like blouse, to give it away to him

that had none;[1] while the apostles were told to have only one; as if they set out, the poorest of the poor.[2]

In His constant wanderings as a teacher and healer, no landscape, except, perhaps, some in the thirsty south, would be without the fig-tree. It was in its shade He found Nathanael, when returning from the Jordan, and even now it often spreads its branches over the track that serves for road,[3] inviting passers-by to seek fruit on them, sometimes before the season.[4] Its richly green leaves hung over many a rough stone wall at His well-loved Bethany, and Bethphage, the house of figs, was on His way thence to Jerusalem, on the other side of Olivet, which itself is, even now, thickly sprinkled with it; often over the open slopes. At Nazareth, it breaks the bareness of the gray rounded hills; in the narrow lanes which serve for streets, it softens the glare of the white flat-roofed houses, and, both above them, on the unenclosed knolls and hollows, and below them, in the long sweep of the valley, and up its sides, the eye rests on many clumps of it, within hedges of tall, hideous prickly pear, or growing free. The green hills of Ephraim, which Christ so often crossed, are rich with the living embroidery of fig- and olive-trees; but He could sit beneath neither in the wide space of the Temple grounds, when He was weary, or when He wished to address the crowds gathered round Him, as He might have done had He lived in the days of the old Temple, for the abhorrence of idolatry had forbidden trees to be planted in the Temple grounds, after the Return, lest they should be used as a "grove," or seem like one. From the earliest times, figs had been a great article of food in Palestine, and Christ,

[1] Luke iii. 11.
[2] Matt. x. 10; Mark vi. 9; Luke ix. 3.
[3] Matt. xxi. 19.
[4] Mark xi. 13.

no doubt, many a time, made a meal of a few, with a bit of the flat unleavened bread of the country. I have, indeed, myself, seen just such a repast, which would not go far to satisfy the appetites of others than Orientals. At Shiloh, a poor boy took out some figs from the bosom of his shirt, and offered them to me, and cakes of figs have been much in vogue, since long before Abigail sent 200 cakes of them to soothe the anger of David.[1] Early figs, indeed, were so much prized, that God is said to have loved the tribes in the wilderness as men like these first ripe figs.[2] To a mind like that of our Lord, it was, hence, natural, to use such a tree for illustrations in His discourses. The bare-armed, turbaned gardener, in his blue gaberdine, his knife hanging from his girdle, was, with Him, a symbol of His heavenly Father, pruning the living trees of His garden, that they might bring forth more fruit;[3] and, in other ways, He, once and again, introduces it. At Cana, the use of wine would not surprise Him, for Palestine had, from the earliest times, been a great wine-growing country, though we may be sure that, had wine been abused as strong drink is with us, He would have shunned even its moderate use, as John the Baptist did. The waterpots for the endless ceremonial washings of the Jews, were huge triumphs of the potter, for they held, we are told, from eighteen to twenty-seven gallons each, so that, in all, the six at Cana would hold from 110 to 160 gallons. Christ, Himself, speaks of drunkenness,[4] and it is mentioned over thirty times in the Old Testament. The widespread insobriety of the ten tribes, moreover, is often denounced by the prophets,[5] so that intemperance was only too well known in

[1] 1 Sam. xxv. 18.
[2] Hos. ix. 10.
[3] John xv. 2.
[4] Matt. xxiv. 49; Luke xii. 45.
[5] Isa. xxviii. 1, etc.

Judæa. We must, therefore, regard the miracle at Cana as asserting the innocence of a proper use of wine and the like. But, while it is thus left to the Christian liberty of all, to use innocently or to abstain, can we doubt what our Lord would have done, in countries like Britain, where it is admitted that strong drink is the cause of more human misery, than war, pestilence, and famine combined? The love that died for man would never have hesitated to give up a glass of wine or beer to win him from ruin.

But, to return to the water-jars; the art of the potter was familiar to our Lord, as one of the oldest followed among His people, for a distinct clan of potters, who were in the service of the kings, is mentioned in Chronicles,[1] and Jeremiah speaks of the craft as having its headquarters outside one of the gates of Jerusalem.[2] There is, indeed, at this time, a vast bed of potsherds at the south-west of the city wall, near the Sultan's pool, where there seems to have formerly been a gate—very probably the potter's gate to which Jeremiah refers. How often must Christ have passed the humble work-place; rude beyond our conceptions; and seen the potter sitting at his wheel, a disk of wood set horizontally, and made to revolve rapidly by the foot pressing round a larger disk below, joined by an upright to the one above. The lump of clay, put on the higher disk, is soon moulded into any shape desired, by the dexterous use of the potter's hands, aided only by a piece of wood and a dash of water, as the mass revolves. Vessels of many kinds were made in Christ's day, and were then, it seems, glazed, though the art of glazing has been long lost in the East.

In the Temple courts, a large space in the section rented

[1] 1 Chron. iv. 23. [2] Jer. xviii. 1 ff.; xix. 1 ff.

out by the "dean and chapter," as we should say, for the sale of "merchandise," required, in any way, in connection with the public services or sacrifices, was occupied by dealers in earthenware of many kinds; Passover ovens, dishes for offerings, and much else. The oxen sold in the Temple-pens, in this strange market, were, I suppose, like those now seen on the sea-coast plains, small and lean; counterparts, in a measure, of the black cattle of the Scotch hills, at the season when they are leanest. The wretched pasture of the hills being too poor for them, they are fed, most of the year, on the coast slopes. The droves of sheep, goats, and oxen must have made the roads busy with crowds of victims, streaming from every direction to Jerusalem, the great market, though the various towns would offer a limited demand, besides.

When Christ left the capital, after the Passover during which He had driven the traders from the Temple, His heart was sore grieved by the news that John had been cast into prison. In the East this means a far harder fate, as a rule, than we can realize. At Gaza I saw a crowd of men caged up in a small barred space, with no room to move, and no means of attending to their personal cleanliness; and at Rome, the Tullianum, below the Capitol, still shews, in its subterranean horrors, the dire misery inflicted in antiquity, on persons accused, whether innocent or guilty. John, however, must, at times, have been allowed to sit—perhaps in another Gaza-cage—where he could see and be seen, for his disciples could converse with him. In any case, his fate was a foreshadowing to Christ of His own.

It was near the close of the year, when our Lord sat on Jacob's well, yet the hot sky made our Lord glad to

ask the woman of Samaria for a draught of water. The heat, indeed, makes the relief of the thirst even of the lower creatures, a special form of Oriental charity. Water is put by kind hands, into little hollows on tombs, for the birds, and cups are sometimes chained to tombstones, beside a jar of water, for the passing traveller; a legacy having been left by some one, to secure this being done. In Egypt, water-sellers are often paid by visitors at religious festivals, to give water away to any one who asks it; a cupful to each; the distributor chanting a short cry as he goes along, inviting the thirsty to partake of the charity offered them, in the name of God, and praying that paradise and pardon may be the lot of him who paid for the generous gift.[1] At Easter, the pilgrims on the main road from Jaffa to Jerusalem, are still offered water by children, at Abu Ghoosh, and similar bounty is practised, occasionally, on other routes of travellers. Thus, the assurance of the Saviour to the apostles, when He sent them out, that "whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward,"[2] must thus have had a vividness to them, which, in our colder climate, it is not easy to realize. Even the heathen, indeed, feel strongly on this matter, in hot countries, for the "Asiatic Miscellany" tells us[3] that the Hindoos sometimes fetch water from a great distance, and, after boiling it, that it may be safer, stand from morning to night on some great road, and, in honour of their god, offer it to all passers-by. But that Christ should ask a woman for water, especially when He was a Jew, and she a Samaritan, astonished the disciples, for it was contrary to

[1] Lane. [2] Matt. x. 42. [3] Vol. ii. 142.

all notions of propriety, that a man should speak to a woman, and, still more so as the speaker was a rabbi. It was to break down such narrow and unworthy conventionalities, however, that Christ acted as He did, for He abhorred the mock religion, which tricks itself in a mere mask of virtue, assumed to hide the evil beneath. Wells in Palestine have no wheel and rope, for common use, as with us; each comer bringing her rope with her, and a skin pail; the weight of the water as each skinful is pulled up, wearing the stone over the well into deep grooves, as we see at Beersheba and elsewhere.

Roman and Greek civilization had developed many arts, in that age, in Palestine, and appliances, now rude, were then, in many directions, much better; but whatever the quality of their work, the trade of rope-spinners was a flourishing one in Christ's day. The Hebrews never had ships for sea voyages, except while trade with India was carried on from the Red Sea, by Solomon, and one or two other kings, but cordage was needed for the many boats on the Lake of Galilee, and for ordinary uses on land. We read in the Bible, of cord, twine, and ropes, made into snares, nets, and much else. A rope served the poor, at times, for a girdle;[1] tent-ropes were much used, cords for bows, for measuring, for carrying the heavy loads of the hamals, or porters; and Christ found small cords readily, to drive out the traders from the Temple. Nor was He without sad experience of their use, in the most bitter ways, when He came to the High Priest's house bound like a felon, or was kept thus bound till led to the cross. They are often mentioned in the Gospels. No one could bind the possessed man, who lived in the tombs;[2] the man without

[1] Job xxx. 11. [2] Mark v. 3.

the wedding garment was bound, hand and foot;[1] the strong man needed to be bound before his goods could be spoiled;[2] the colt on which our Lord sat had to be loosed; and binding and loosing are constantly used by Him, in the ordinary metaphors of speech.

The tender treatment of his slave by the Capernaum centurion would be all the more pleasing to incarnate Love, from the contrast it offered to the beating with many stripes,[3] which was only too common, or the selling a poor creature, with his wife and children, and all that he had,[4] or the handing him over to the tormentors,[5] or the binding him with fetters and chains, like a wild beast,[6] or the whole world of misery included in the words, "to set at liberty them that are *bruised*."[7]

Jesus had spent the first thirty years of His life in the little world of Nazareth, where life slept out its span in the dull minuteness of the pettiest details, with nothing to occupy the thoughts of ordinary men, beyond the cares and gossip of humble villagers. To make simple implements—as I have said—a rough plough, put together with primitive rudeness, two or three pieces of wood forming the whole; or a yoke for the beasts drawing it; or a long goad; or some carpentry of quite singular primitiveness, according to our notions, for the door, or window-frame, or manger, or store chest of a neighbour, could have been all that Joseph had to do, in such a dreamily quiet place, with such a poor and small population. Christ's removal to Capernaum, therefore, was the choice of a larger centre, where He could meet His fellow-men, and hope to spread His influence. Fishing was its great

[1] Matt. xxii. 13. [2] Mark iii. 27. [3] Luke xii. 48. [4] Matt. xviii. 25.
[5] Matt. xviii. 34. [6] Mark v. 4. [7] Luke iv. 18.

industry, though its position, at the lake end of a Roman road, brought the trader who had the pearl of great price to sell, or the travelling merchant with Babylonian carpets, or fine robes for the courtiers at Tiberias. Pearls, indeed, and precious stones generally, seem to have been far more plentiful in antiquity than they are now, for Nero had alcoves of his golden house crusted with them, and Christ chose His comparison of idle attempts at good, from casting these costly things before swine. At Capernaum, also, He was daily in contact with the excisemen, who levied the dues on articles brought into the town, and on the wood, and country produce, landed from the other side of the lake by boats ; the Apostle Matthew being one of them. The strand must have been constantly busy in those days, with the coming and going of small craft, for the population was very large, not only on the lake but over the whole country. I suppose they were much the same as the solitary example still on the waters, in which I sailed along the shore and which I have described already.[1] On the deck at the stern of some such boat, or in its rough hollow, our Lord often lay down to sleep, after the ceaseless labours of the day, and the strain of an earnestness so all-absorbing, that even His mother and His brethren thought He was "beside Himself." The crew in my boat were four in number, but in a boat used, for the moment only, to carry the apostles and their Master over the lake, the thirteen could easily have found room. Boats and nets occupy a large space in the simple pictures in the Gospels ; the boats, doubtless, all very much alike ; the nets different, for different uses. For, while Peter and Andrew are described as casting one kind into the water, John and

[1] P. 124.

James are seen, two verses after, mending another kind, in their boat. Three sorts are mentioned in the Gospels ; the first, that which Peter and Andrew were using, when our Lord finally won them as His disciples ;[1] though a second name is used for it, seven times, in the narratives of the incident, in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. This only shews, however, that they had more nets than one, so that while one was being washed after the fruitless toil of the night, another was free to be cast afresh, at Christ's command.[2] It was this net, also, that was used at the last appearance of our Lord after He had risen, when Peter girt his coat about him, and swam hastily to the shore, in his eagerness to kneel at the feet of his Lord. That he had been without the "coat"—that is, the ordinary abba, still worn over the usual long shirt which is the whole dress of the humbler classes, except in cold weather, or in the roughness of life on the open lake—was in keeping with the usages of to-day, for a man on my boat, stepping out to cast a throw-net in the shallows at the edge of the lake, tucked up his shirt so that he was virtually naked, and the men of a boat on the Red Sea did the same when carrying me ashore. Indeed, fishermen at this time work at their rude calling, for the most part, entirely naked, so that Peter may, very probably, have been thus wholly nude, when he recognized Christ, and covered himself with his "coat," to swim to Him.[3] The third kind of net is mentioned only in our Lord's parable of the kingdom of heaven being like a net ; the one named being the great seine ; often, no doubt, then, as now, of huge length and vast sweep.

[1] Matt. iv. 18 ; Mark i. 16.
[2] Matt. iv. 20, 21 ; Mark i. 18, 19 ; Luke v. 2, 4, 5, 6.
[3] John xxi. 6, 8, 11.

But this was, perhaps, beyond the means of the apostles, as it is never spoken of in connection with them.

A vivid picture of their everyday life is presented in the notice of their washing their nets, or mending them, or swimming naked in the lake, with the rope of the net in their teeth, to carry it out for a wide sweep, or dragging it ashore, and then separating the good from the worthless, and throwing the one into pails,[1] to sell, or cure, but casting the bad into the lake again; hard-working men, in fact, at home in their very humble calling, then no more dignified than it is now. With such materials, from such a social position, had our Lord to work, and we can fancy how hard it would be for the High Priests and rabbis, and, indeed, any class but the poorest, to accept a new religion from so lowly a source. For Christ Himself, we must remember, was only a village carpenter, and a carpenter's son, to the men of His day; a peasant, in fact, from a part of the country of which no one seems to have had more knowledge, than we have of some lonely village in Caithness or Ross-shire.

If, as seems the fact, Capernaum stood at the sweet spot now called Khan Minieh, the gentle slopes behind would, day by day, shew the sower, the reaper, or the slow toiler after the light plough, according to the season, and the plain of Gennesaret, close at hand, would bring before our Lord the husbandman, busy in the olive or fig-yard, or in the vineyard: supplying Him with the homely but perfect illustrations which lighted up His discourses. Fruit-culture, indeed, was then a great industry in these parts, for the whole plain was, in Christ's day, luxuriant garden ground.

[1] Matt. xiii. 48.

The humble oil lamp burning feebly in Peter's house, through the night, or when needed at other times, supplied Jesus with frequent metaphors, as when He reminded His hearers, more than once, that, as men did not light a lamp to put it under a bushel, God had not made them lights in the world, to hide the light from their fellows.[1] Thus, also, He spoke of the eye as the lamp of the body, or compared John to a burning and shining lamp, or the woman, lighting the lamp in her single dark chamber, to which light entered only dimly from the door, even by day, and seeking diligently for her lost piece of silver, to Himself, in the zeal he shewed for the good of even a single lost sheep, as seen in His receiving sinners and eating with them ; a familiarity so unbecoming a rabbi, in the opinion of the Pharisees and scribes.[2]

The houses of Khan Minieh, so far as the cut stone dug up by the peasants, for mortar, indicates, were of the white limestone of the hills behind ; not of the black basalt of Chorazin and Tell Hum, and, thus, the narrow lanes which served for streets in Capernaum, would be as cheerful as Nazareth or Bethlehem is now, but with much more that was picturesque and commanding. For, in those days, the public buildings were often very fine, even in out-of-the-way places, and the synagogue presented by the Roman centurion to the Jews would, no doubt, be worthy of him and of them. How often must Christ have heard the trumpet, announcing the beginning or close of a Sabbath ! How often must the now long-vanished synagogue have been His " Father's house " to Him, on the many Sabbaths and service days that found Him in " His own city " !

[1] Matt. v. 15 ; Mark iv. 21 ; Luke viii. 16 ; xi. 33.
[2] Luke xv. 8.

What an excitement must there have been, when, on the first Sabbath of His Capernaum life, He rose in the synagogue and "taught as having authority, and not as the scribes;" speaking His own thoughts, and not simply repeating, as the scribes did, the sayings of "the elders." What must the commotion have been, when the "unclean spirit," which interrupted Him as He thus taught, was ordered to hold its peace, and come out of the man it held in bondage, and forthwith did so, "tearing," or convulsing him, and fled with a loud shriek![1] And when, in quick succession, miracle after miracle followed; the healing of Peter's wife's mother of a fever, on His taking her by the hand; the marvellous cure of the paralytic, carried on his sleeping-mat to the flat roof of Peter's house, and let down, through the opening in it, into the upper chamber in which the great Teacher was speaking—a man dead except in name! the cure of the centurion's slave, and, still more wonderful, the raising of the young daughter of Jairus by a word, when all present declared her dead!

How, one would think, should such a series of evidently superhuman acts have awed the community, and won all to a reverent acceptance of the "new teaching"! Day by day, its wondrous fulness welled out, to all around the great rabbi, in discourse and parable, of which we have a few samples preserved in the Gospels—the parables of the Sower, the Tares, the Treasure hid in a Field, the Merchant seeking Goodly Pearls, the Net cast into the Sea, the discourse on fasting, in Levi's house, that on formality, delivered to the Pharisees, another on faith, and, still another, on humility, forbearance and brotherly love.[2] The Sermon

[1] Mark i. 21–28.
[2] Matt. xiii. 9, 10; xv. 1; Mark iv. 3; v. 22; ix. 33; Luke iv. 38; vii. 1; John vi. 22.

on the Mount, also, was delivered in the close neighbourhood. Yet it was in the very synagogue where He had so often spoken, and where men had been amazed at His Divine power over even devils, that He was forsaken by the bulk of His disciples, immediately after He had fed the five thousand from a few loaves and small fish; the town as a whole, moreover, so entirely refusing to follow Him as a teacher, that He, at last, when even His patience had been worn out by their callous indifference and blind prejudice, turned against it, and denounced it, and the other places in the neighbourhood, in which most of His mighty works had been done, for their impenitence. "Thou, Capernaum," said He, "shalt go down unto Hades, and it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, heathen cities though they be, than for thee." But, if even the Great Teacher failed, with all His miracles to support His words, in winning the population so specially favoured by His ministrations, is it any wonder that our clergy and missionaries should find the struggle hard, in their respective spheres?[1]

It is striking that, amidst all the despondency, which, we are told, weighed down our Lord only too often, He seems to have drawn brightness of soul from nature to cheer Him, and thus had a joy of His own; if not from man, from the glories of the world at large. The Gospels are, hence, full of a joyously thoughtful communion with the wide creation. The fields, the hills, the highway, the details of country scenes and occupations, are mingled with pictures of life in the town or village. The sower and the seed, the birds of the air, the foxes, the hen and its brood, the lilies and roses, the voice of the turtle, the fragrance of the orchard, the blossom of the almond or vine, the swift

[1] Matt. xi. 23; John vi. 59, 60.

deer, the strong eagle, the twittering sparrow, the lonely pelican, the stork returning with spring, planting, pruning, digging and harvesting, the hiring of labourers, the toil of the fisherman, the playing of children, the sound of the mill, the lord and his servants, the merchantman, the courtier in soft robes, and many similar touches of the life of the day, common to the Gospels and the Bible at large, shew Christ to have watched, with a keen observation, all that came in His way, either in nature or in the world of mankind, and thus to have had a sweet spring of mental pleasure, even from lower things, amidst all the bitterness of His daily trials.

CHAPTER XV.

CHRIST IN GALILEE.

THE sensation made by Christ's miracles and teaching must have been profound. "The report of Him," we are told, "went forth into all Syria."[1] "Great multitudes followed Him."[2] Indeed, so marked was the excitement, that He "could no more openly enter into a city;" but though He kept in the retirement of "desert places, they came to Him from every quarter."[3] Nor is it any wonder, when we read that He "went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the good tidings of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness, among the people." Crowds flocked to one so extraordinary, from every part of the land; from Galilee on the north; from the half-heathen towns, on the east of the Lake of Tiberias, known as Decapolis, or "the ten cities," from the semi-independent alliance of the local Greek cities, under the Romans; and even from Jerusalem, in the south, and from beyond Jordan.[4] John was now in prison, apparently from fear, on the part of the authorities, that his wide popularity might be used for political ends, by raising a movement in his favour as the expected Messiah, but the excitement about Jesus was quite as great, for, as the disciples of John said, "all men came to Him."[5]

[1] Matt. iv. 24. [2] Matt. viii. 1; Luke v. 15. [3] Mark i. 45.
[4] Matt. iv. 23-25. [5] John iii. 26.

It was, therefore, necessary, that Christ should keep away from towns, where there was an easily roused mob, and seek the safe obscurity of lonely districts. He could not, indeed, even allow those He had healed, to speak of their having been so, lest the stir caused by such wonders should bring on Him the same fate, at the hands of the civil authorities, as had just befallen John.[1]

In our day, nothing strikes the traveller in Palestine more than the fewness of the inhabitants, but the ruins of towns and villages shew a very different state of things two thousand years ago. Burton, indeed, says, that, to one looking down from some height in Lebanon, "the land must, in many places, have appeared to be one continuous town," and in the district round the ancient Hamath, north of Baalbek, on the Orontes, Drake tells us, ruins so abound, that it seems as if the Arabs were right in saying that, in old times, a man might have travelled a year in this part, and never have slept twice in the same village.[2]

In the charming hill landscapes of Galilee, now so lonely, Christ would, therefore, be at once away from political centres, and amidst a teeming population of His fellow-countrymen, who were much less under the malignant spell of the rabbis, than the people on the shores of the lake, or of the south. But, even here, so wonderful a hakim could not fail to attract all the sick and diseased, coming in hopes of being cured by Him. Among these, epileptics, palsied, those possessed with demons, and lepers, are specified, though there must have been, besides, only too many other victims of "divers" unnamed "diseases and torments."

[1] Matt. viii. 1–4; Mark i. 40–45; Luke v. 12–16.
[2] Unexplored Syria, i. 74; ii. 160.

What numbers would need healing in an age when science was unknown, and miracle had to supply its absence, may be imagined from the crowds that gather, to-day, round every traveller's tent, on the chance that he may be able to do something for them. But the amazing simplicity of Christ's exercise of His almighty power, as shewn in the Gospels, fills us with wonder. A touch cures the leper, opens the eyes of the blind, or the ears of the deaf, and unlooses the tongue of the dumb, releases from long chronic infirmity, stops the issue of blood, raises from fever, and restores a mutilated organ.[1] Nor is even a touch needed: a word, sometimes from a distance, is enough. For at a word we find ten lepers cleansed, the centurion's slave cured of palsy, a devil expelled from the Syro-Phœnician's daughter, the unclean spirit cast out of the man in the synagogue, and from the epileptic boy at Cæsarea Philippi, the nobleman's son cured of fever, the utterly helpless paralytic, let down through the roof, restored, the withered hand made whole, sight bestowed on the blind, health given back to the impotent, and the dead aroused to second life.[2] It appears from the Gospels, that, among the diseases thus healed, leprosy was not, in that day, any more than now, isolated from the general community. To come close to any one was forbidden, but, short of this, lepers moved about freely.[3] That they did not, however, live among their fellow-countrymen, where they liked, is to be assumed; spots outside the town or village gates, then, as now, being apparently assigned them.

[1] Matt. viii. 3; ix. 29; Mark vii. 33; viii. 22; Luke iv. 38; viii. 46; xiii. 12; xxii. 50; John ix. 8.

[2] Matt. viii. 13; Mark i. 25; vii. 30; Luke v. 24; vi. 6; vii. 13; ix. 42; xvii. 14; xviii. 41; John iv. 46; v. 8; xi. 38.

[3] Matt. viii. 2; xxvi. 6; Mark i. 40; Luke xvii. 12.

That they were numerous, may be taken for granted, by the frequent mention of them as the objects of our Lord's pity.[1]

The healing of the paralytic man, in the upper room of Christ's "home," in Peter's house, was especially important as the turning-point in our Lord's relations to the ecclesiastical authorities. From that time His fate was sealed. He, henceforth, moved under the shadow of the cross. The flat house-top used, then, to reach the Healer, is often mentioned in the Bible. A number of houses being, at times, joined, the disciples were told to take advantage of this when trouble came. They should not, He told them, come down to take anything from the house, but should rather flee along the roofs, and thus escape.[2] Saul took Samuel to the roof, that they might be quite secret. Absalom spread a tent on the roof of his father's house for the ladies of the harem; and in the days of Ahaz, altars were built by both king and people, to "the host of heaven," on their "housetops." Isaiah pictures the population of Moab fleeing to the roofs, at the news that their capital had fallen, and venting their distress in "howling and weeping abundantly;"[3] and he also paints the citizens of Jerusalem as "wholly gone to the housetops," to catch the first indications of the Assyrians being really about to invest the city.[4] Jeremiah, in the same way, predicts that there will be "lamentations upon all the housetops of Moab."[5] In summer, the flat roofs are the most pleasant part of the dwelling, either by day or night; but in the cold and rainy winter they are such a

[1] Matt. x. 8; xi. 5; Luke vii. 22.
[2] Matt. xxiv. 17; Mark xiii. 15; Luke xvii. 31.
[3] Isa. xv. 3. [4] Isa. xxii. 1. [5] Jer. xlviii. 38.

type of the reverse, that the book of Proverbs could find no emblem of misery more forcible. "It is better," we are told in it, "to dwell in the corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house."[1] Such roofs, further, offer the means of easy intimations of any matter through the community, and are, hence, the ordinary place from which the public crier spreads his announcements; a usage to which Christ refers when He tells His disciples to send abroad the glad news they had to proclaim, from the same familiar pulpit.[2] To get access to the roof, the better houses have an opening, reached by a ladder from the upper chamber, but closed in the cold weather. Was it the covering of this, which the bearers of the paralytic removed, when they were anxious to get him by some means into the presence of Jesus? At Assiout, in Upper Egypt, I saw an arrangement of this kind, on the roof of the American Mission House. It is said, indeed, by St. Mark, that the roof was "broken up," and by St. Luke, that the poor man was "let down through the tiles;" St. Mark's words implying, "to dig through" and then "to remove the tiles and earth," while St. Luke speaks of tiles of burnt clay. Such roofs, covered with tiles, are unknown, now, in Palestine, and may indicate some arrangement no longer in use; but, whatever the roof may have been, it must have rested on a bed of reeds or other such material, and if literally "broken up" must have covered Jesus and those round Him with rubbish, if indeed it did not injure them.[3] The easiest solution, therefore, appears to be, the removal of a cover from a hatchway. The flatness of the roof in the East must

[1] Prov. xxi. 9. [2] Matt. x. 27.
[3] Matt. ix. 2; Mark ii. 1-12; Luke v. 17-26.

always be remembered in reading the Bible, for much is done there of which we, with our notions, have no conception. Linen and flax, for example, were dried on the roofs,[1] and the booths for the feast of Tabernacles were raised on them, as far as possible.[2] That they were habitually used for private prayer, is evident from the example of St. Peter.[3]

Among those gathered to listen to Christ, when the paralytic was healed, were some Pharisees and scribes, who are called, also, doctors of the Law.[4] The excitement produced by His "new" teaching and miracles had become so great, that these official guardians of orthodoxy had "come out of every village of Galilee, and Judæa, and Jerusalem," to see whether they should recognize or denounce Him. The Pharisees were the most prominent body in the Jewish religious world in these strange days, and were held in great reverence for their zeal in the observance of the countless precepts of the rabbis, handed down from generation to generation, with continual expansions. They had already risen to importance a hundred years before Christ, as "separated" from all less minutely faithful brethren, and devoted their lives to an agonizing scrupulosity in the honouring of the multitudinous "traditions of the elders," that is, of the rabbis of the past. As one sign of this they bound themselves to pay all tithes ordered by the Law, before using or selling anything, and even added voluntary tithes on trifles such as garden herbs, and imposed on themselves a tax of ten per cent., for the Temple, on their clear annual income.[5] Their dread of legal "uncleanness"

[1] Josh. ii. 6.
[2] Neh. viii. 16.
[3] Acts x. 9.
[4] Luke v. 17, 21.
[5] Matt. xxiii. 23; Luke xviii. 12.

kept them in constant terror; so countless were the possible sources of defilement, from food, clothing, touching their fellow-men, or impure vessels, or furniture, and a thousand similar dangers. To guard against the chance of breaking any precept of the Law, they had, indeed, created a so-called "fence" round it, of arbitrary details, the perfect observance of which required ceaseless watchfulness, and induced such mere formalism as brought down on them the sweeping denunciations of our Lord, and, in the end, made the very name of Pharisee, even among the Jews themselves, equivalent to hypocrite. The "scribes" were called also, in the Gospels, "lawyers," "teachers of the law," and "doctors of the law."[1] Most of them were Pharisees, but there were some who were Sadducees.[2] They had risen to influence, since the Return from Babylon, through the immensely greater importance attached, after that period, to the study of the Law, and in the days of Christ had made themselves the despotic masters of the popular religion. It was theirs, alone, to transcribe the sacred books, but they were also their recognized expounders, and, as such, took the foremost place in the Jewish religious world. Some, no doubt, confined themselves to transcription; others became lawyers in our sense, arguing for or against, in the Jewish Church courts, on the thousand questions rising in connection with divorce, the Sabbath laws, and the like. But, as an order, they were specially devoted to the study and exposition of the Law, using the synagogues as their chief field of display, and only too often taking their seat in the first place below the reader's desk, that they might be more likely to have an opportunity of shewing their skill, in commenting on the lesson

[1] Matt. xxii. 35; Luke v. 17, 21, etc.; vii. 30. [2] Acts xxiii. 9.

of the day, when the head man of the synagogue called on them, as nearest to him.[1]

Their success in moulding the genius of their race in religious matters is seen even to-day, for the tenacity with which Judaism still holds to the teachings of its earliest ages is simply due to the influence of the rabbis, of the past and present. The early scribes had no titles, but, in Christ's day, they were passionately fond of being hailed as Rabbi, "my great master," and aspired even to the higher title of Rabban, or Rabboni, as we have our Reverend, Very Reverend, and Most Reverend. Salutations in the market-place, the most frequented resort, were dear to them;[2] the reverential kiss of scholars or brother rabbis; the greeting as Abba, father;[3] and outer robes of extra length, compared with those of other citizens, or of our Lord and His disciples,[4] with broad fringes and huge tassels, were their delight. They were the ultimate authority in all matters of faith and practice, and, along with the upper priests and the elders, the judges in the Church courts both in Jerusalem and through the country. Their pride seems almost inconceivable, as revealed in the Talmud, for they claimed that any scribe was worth more than all the "common people" together, so that he had a right to demand all honour from them. Still more, scribes were asserted to be honoured, as such, by God Himself, and the angels were said to sing their praise, while they would each hold in heaven the rank they had gained on earth. So great, indeed, was to be the respect shewn them, that their words were to be accepted as infallible, even if they maintained that a thing was on their left hand which all could see was

[1] Matt. xxiii. 1; Mark xii. 39; Luke iv. 17.
[2] Matt. xxiii. 7.
[3] Matt. xxiii. 9.
[4] Matt. xxiii. 5.

at their right. They illustrated, in short, the special vices of the clerical order when it claims a monopoly of spiritual knowledge and power. They and the Pharisees were, hence, the natural enemies of one like Christ who denounced mere pretence, thought nothing of mere forms, and set the keeping of the moral law infinitely above exactness of ceremonial observance. That He should have incurred the ill-will of such powerful bodies as the scribes and Pharisees, was inevitable; and that it finally took form at the healing of the paralytic in Peter's house, was only the sign that they were bent on finding some pretext for it.

The call of St. Matthew, which followed soon after this momentous incident, must have cheered our Lord, by the proof it afforded that His labours were not without fruit, even in the most unlikely quarters. But the acceptance of a publican as a disciple would be an additional shock to the bigots of the Law, who took for granted that any Jew holding such an office under the Romans, was, by the very fact, cut off from Israel, and doomed to wrath in the world to come. Despised by the community at large, the class, as a whole, turned against society, and, being denied common respect, lost respect for itself, sinking to a war of revenge, in the abuse of its position by extortion and manifold oppression. They had to levy customs on all imports and exports, and imposts on all goods and articles for sale, as the continental nations still do, with food, in their octroi. There were harbour dues, and a land-tax, and tolls on the roads and on every bridge. Mines and saltworks, chalk pits and stone quarries, yielded their quota to the exchequer; state domains paid a tenth of their grain produce, and wine, oil, garden-fruits, and pasture had to pay a fifth; nor did the fisheries of the Lake of Galilee escape.

With such a sweep for their net, the publicans had endless opportunities for corruption; increasing the excise on those who would not pay them blackmail, and making things easy for those who were complaisant. The people were utterly helpless, for the head farmers of the local revenues were of the same order as the judges, that is, were knights; so that complaints came before men who had been, or hoped to be, tax-farmers, or who at that moment were so. The Roman governors knew how to get a large share of the plunder, thus extorted from the unhappy provincials; and what with their greed and that of the tax-farmers, of whom the publicans were the agents, no class could have a worse reputation than that borne by these instruments of wrong. Thus the company at Matthew's house is described as made up of "publicans and sinners,"[1] and they are elsewhere in the Gospels classed with harlots and the abhorred heathen.[2] The Baptist evidently had as poor an opinion of them as his countrymen, for he tells them, when they ask him what, as baptized persons, they should do—to exact no more than their due.[3] Jesus can find nothing more pointed, to take all claim to merit from an action, than to ask, "If the publicans, even, do not act thus?"[4] Zaccheus, the head of the rich post at Jericho, has to admit that he had been more or less frequently guilty of taking money by false accusations.[5] Nor can we forget the prayer of the humble publican in the Temple, "God be merciful to me, a sinner."[6] Many of the class were slaves or freedmen of the tax-farmers; not a few were the more worthless of the heathen settlers in Palestine, and this

[1] Matt. ix. 10.
[2] Matt. xi. 19; xxi. 31; Mark ii. 15; Luke vii. 34; xv. 1; xvii. 13.
[3] Luke iii. 12, 13.
[4] Matt. v. 46.
[5] Luke xix. 8.
[6] Luke xviii. 13.

added to the loathing of the office by the Jews. When, however, a Hebrew stooped to become a publican, not only he but his family were boycotted by every one who had any self-respect, and his witness would not be received in a Jewish court. It may be imagined, therefore, how deeply Christ compromised Himself with the public feeling of the day, in associating with these pariahs, and, above all, how dreadful it must have appeared, when He chose one of them to be an apostle. Nothing could be more grandly brave, than that He dared to do right in the face of universal condemnation.

CHAPTER XVI.

GOD'S ACRE IN CHRIST'S DAY.

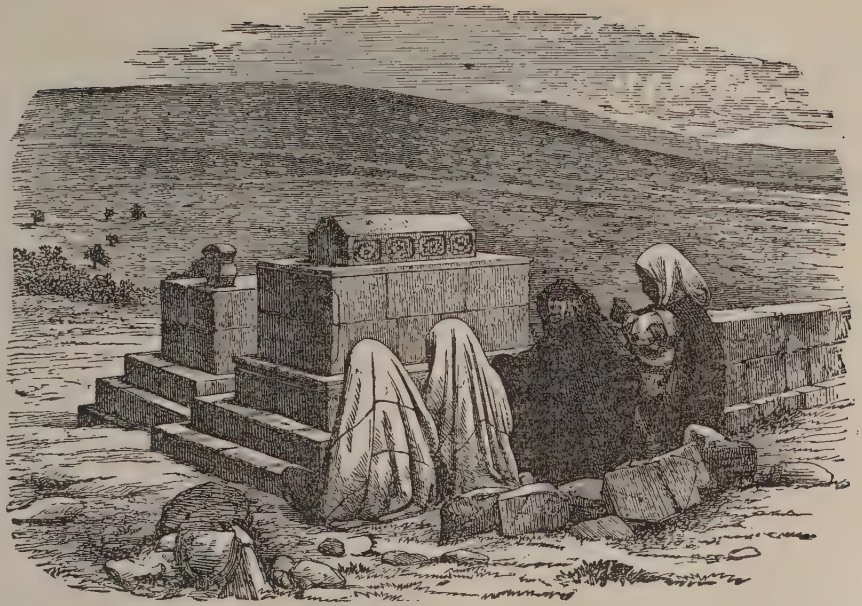
THE mention of the dead by our Lord as "all that are in the tombs"[1] points to the mode of putting away the dead in Palestine, in His day. The human heart is the same in all ages. Joseph fell upon his father's dead face and kissed it;[2] then reverently put his hands on the sightless eyes and closed them,[3] before handing over the corpse to the embalmers. So, doubtless, it was in the towns and villages through which Christ journeyed, in His circuits, though there was no embalming, but a solemn giving back of the dust, to the dust from which it was taken.[4] After being washed,[5] the body was wrapped in a great linen cloth,[6] though the limbs were sometimes bound up separately, to preserve more of the human outline;[7] the well-to-do putting quantities of fragrant spices inside the linen, to spread round the poor decaying form, for a while, a sweet odour. In the old times of the kings, it had been the custom to burn quantities of fragrant spices at royal burials, as a special honour to the dead, and to air the pride and vanity of their survivors. Thus, Zedekiah received the homage of the same burning of odours, as his fathers, "the former kings who were before" him.[8] Thanks to Christ,

[1] John v. 28.
[2] Gen. l. 1.
[3] Gen. xlvi. 4.
[4] Gen. iii. 19.
[5] Acts ix. 37.
[6] Matt. xxvii. 59.
[7] John xi. 44.
[8] Jer. xxxiv. 5.

death is now tempered by the vision of immortality, so that natural grief is softened in the thought that the beloved lost one has entered into joy; but there was little of this mitigation of sorrow to the ancient Hebrew. The contrast between the language of Job and that of St. Paul, respecting death, is very great. To the one, "man lieth down, and riseth not;" to the other, to be "absent from the body, is to be present with the Lord."[1] To the Hebrew "there was no remembrance of God in the grave; no giving Him thanks."[2] Piercing lamentations accompanied the corpse to its last home; women who lived by wailing on such occasions, rending the heart by wild shrieks and doleful sorrowings, such as—"Ah, my brother!" "Ah, sister!" "Ah, lord!" "Ah, his glory!"[3] In the death-chamber of the little daughter of Jairus, in this way, there was quite a "tumult, and many weeping and wailing greatly,"[4] for the house where death is at hand, is thronged by female neighbours; the very room in which the sufferer lies being crowded. Even the children, in the open ground of towns or villages, on which sellers squatted to vend their wares or produce, played at "wailing" and "beating the breast."[5] On His sad journey to the cross, Jesus was, Himself, followed by "a great multitude of the people, and of women who bewailed and lamented Him."[6] So, the "devout men who buried St. Stephen, made great lamentation over him."[7]

What such words mean, when used of Orientals, was strikingly shewn at the funeral of the late Khedive of Egypt, though the loud wailing in that case was confined

[1] Job xiv. 12; 2 Cor. v. 8.
[2] Ps. vi. 5.
[3] Jer. xxii. 18; 1 Kings xiii. 30.
[4] Mark v. 38.
[5] Matt. xi. 17.
[6] Luke xxiii. 27.
[7] Acts viii. 2.



Mourners at a Tomb.

to women; the cries and tears of men, which marked the obsequies of the Christian martyr, being awanting. At Cairo, the women threw themselves on their knees, or all their length on the ground, or swayed their bodies into all possible attitudes of overwhelming grief, pouring forth, meanwhile, the tenderest expressions of love and admiration of him who was gone.[1]

But loud wailing was not the only sign of grief among the old Hebrews, when death entered their circle. Men tore their clothes, and fasted;[2] shaved their beards, a great humiliation to an Oriental; beat themselves on the breast, head, and sides, and even cut themselves, in spite of the prohibition in the Law;[3] threw themselves on the ground,[4] or went about with the head covered with dust or ashes, and in mourning garb of rough sackcloth, barefooted, and with the face wrapped up.[5] Hired mourning women were employed; as they are still, in Egypt, in spite of Mohammed's prohibition.[6] The wail, begun in the bereaved house to the accompaniment of flutes,[7] was continued as the corpse was carried, on a bier, at the head of the funeral procession.[8]

The place of burial was, in Christ's day, a tomb cut, as a rule, very roughly, in the soft limestone which everywhere crops out over Palestine; though bodies are now buried in shallow graves, which need a plaster and mud-brick cover over them, to keep the air in any measure healthy, and to prevent the dead from being fished out by jackals. The part north of Jerusalem, or, rather, outside the Damascus

[1] See Lane's *Modern Egyptians*, 474, for the details of public lamentation on the Nile.

[2] 2 Sam. i. 11; xiii. 31. [3] Jer. xvi. 6; Lev. xix. 28. [4] 2 Sam. xiii. 31.

[5] Gen. xxxvii. 34; 2 Sam. xv. 30; xix. 4; Ezek. xxiv. 17, 23; Amos viii. 10.

[6] Jer. ix. 17. [7] Matt. ix. 23. [8] 2 Sam. iii. 31; Luke vii. 13.

gate, was the town burial-ground in Gospel times; the older cemetery, in the rocks of the valley of Hinnom, being full. All over the country, the ridges near towns are hollow with these rude homes of the dead; most of them being mere larger and smaller holes in the rock, for holding more or fewer bodies; each in its separate shallow horizontal hollow. They were originally closed by a great stone,[1] which in at least one case, that of the fine tomb of Queen Helena and her family, outside Jerusalem, on the north, is still to be seen in its place, from having been specially prepared in a round mill-stone shape, and set within rims of the rock, so that it could be rolled over the mouth of the tomb, or away from it, but not removed. The tomb designed for the young man at Nain was, no doubt, one of those near that hamlet; that of Lazarus was one of the many still found in the low ridges of the slopes of Olivet, below the track; and that of our Lord was, apparently, very close to the knoll, possibly with justice, regarded as Calvary. After the return of the funeral train to the house of the departed, its members partook of a simple refreshment of food and wine, sent in by richer neighbours, if the bereaved household was poor.[2] Mourning continued for seven days, or even, in some cases, for thirty; and through this time, as the Egyptians ate no flesh during their "days of grief," the Hebrews used only "bread of mourning," made of barley meal.[3] Gradually, however, love of display, as in all ages, found its opportunity even in the accompaniments of death, culminating, at last, in such feasts to the people as Archelaus gave at the death of his father Herod.

[1] John xi. 38; xx. 1. [2] Deut. xxvi. 14; Tob. iv. 17; Jer. xvi. 7.
[3] Gen. l. 10; Num. xx. 29; Deut. xxxiv. 8; 1 Sam. xxxi. 13; Ezek. xxiv. 17, 22; Hos. ix. 4.

Cremation, first introduced in the Western world by the Greeks, in the fourth century before Christ, never found favour among the Jews, to any great extent; the prevailing sentiment of antiquity being rather for burial, as we see among the Hittites, the Phœnicians, and the Egyptians, whose wonderful tombs, the pyramids, seem to be referred to by Job.[1] The people of Jabesh-gilead, indeed, burned the mutilated bodies of Saul and his sons, to keep them from dishonour by the enemy; but, even in this case, their ashes were buried.[2] In Amos, we read of "him that burneth" a dead person,[3] but this refers to a great mortality, which necessitated the nearest relations to dispose of the body in the quickest way possible. Even in the case of criminals condemned to be burned, their being so was only a specially shameful aggravation of their punishment, before their ashes were buried. The "burning" made for Asa and other kings was, as I have said, a burning of fragrant spices and incense, in honour of the illustrious dead. Burial took place, as it still does in the East, almost immediately after death; partly from the heat of the climate, but, among the Jews, from the fear of ceremonial defilement, as well. That a body should be unburied was, among the Jews, as with other nations of antiquity, the greatest calamity that could befall the dead, and throws additional tenderness on the maternal love of Rizpah, who guarded the corpses of her sons, through the whole summer, from the carrion-eating wild beasts. But it was almost surpassed by the devotion of Tobias, who gave himself to the burial of his slain brethren, at the risk of his own life.[4] To

[1] Gen. xxiii. 6; Num. xxxiii. 4; Job iii. 14.
[2] 1 Sam. xxxi. 12, 13; 2 Sam. xxi. 14.
[3] Amos vi. 10.
[4] Tob. ii. 8.

expose the dead so that they became a prey to the masterless dogs swarming in all Eastern towns, or to jackals, or vultures, was the last depth of misfortune and dishonour.

Tombs, among the Hebrews, contained places for all the members of a family; households loving to think of parents and children resting in the grave together. It was, hence, a special honour when a family grave was given over to a stranger; as when Jehoiada was buried among the kings, in the city of David, because he had done good in Israel, and as when Joseph of Arimathea gave up his new tomb for the burial of Jesus.[1] The only public burial-places were spots set apart for the poor, or foreign pilgrims, dying in Jerusalem,[2] but these were as sacred as the tombs of the rich.[3] Burial in graves in our sense, was very rare among the Hebrews; the filling them up with earth seeming an unworthy hiding away of the dead, and, indeed, it could have been practised only in a very few places; the surface of Palestine being so generally rock. As I have said, the dead were laid in rock-cut tombs or natural caves, with which the country abounds. The patriarchs, for example, were laid in the double cave of Machpela, at Hebron; yet there were graves over which one might walk without knowing of them.[4] Tender human piety, then as strong as now, delighted to hew out tombs for loved ones, or to bury them under shady trees, as was done with Rebecca's nurse under the oak "beneath Bethel,"[5] or as the bones of Saul and Jonathan were laid under a tree at Jabesh-gilead.[6] Sometimes a garden was chosen as the sacred spot, that the lost ones might be near those they had left, or, at least, might lie amidst the sweetness of green

[1] 2 Chron. xxiv. 16; Matt. xxvii. 7. [2] 2 Kings xxiii. 6; Matt. xxvii. 7.
[3] Jer. viii. 6. [4] Luke xi. 44. [5] Gen. xxxv. 8. [6] 1 Sam. xxxi. 13.

leaves and soft air, as must have been the case with those who slept in the tomb cut in the rock, in "the garden of Uzza"—apparently part of the grounds of the palace of Manasseh [1]—or in that which held the body of our Lord.[2] As, however, to prevent ceremonial defilement by stepping on a grave, or unwittingly touching a tomb, it was necessary that every spot where the dead were laid should be readily visible, all tombs or graves, not at once seen from some distance, were regularly whitewashed, each spring, to warn off any stranger, who might, otherwise, have been rendered incapable of joining in the feast, to take part in which he had perhaps journeyed from some far distant land.[3] Gardens, for this reason, must have been outside towns, if they had tombs in them. But the countless tombs were not always left to the silent tenancy of the dead. Poor insane creatures were, from time to time, found seeking a dismal shelter in old forsaken ones; and Isaiah speaks of dealers in the black art, who "sat in the tombs," apparently to consult the dead by their spells.[4] The ridges north of Jerusalem; the eastern slope of the valley of the Kedron, under the city walls; and the rocky edges of the west side of the valley of Hinnom, still shew how the whole of the garden ground, encircling the town, had gradually been utilized for family graves, by the owner of each garden having had one hewn out in it; though, of course, the gardens have long since perished, and the tombs now stand in open ground, abandoned to the basest uses. When we read of Manasseh being buried in his own house, or Samuel in his house at Ramah, or Joab in his in "the wilderness," [5] it means in the garden ground con-

[1] 2 Kings xxi. 18, 26. [2] John xix. 41. [3] Matt. xxiii. 27.
[4] Isa. viii. 19; xxix. 4; lxv. 4; Matt. viii. 28; Mark v. 2; Luke viii. 27.
[5] 1 Sam. xxv. 1; 1 Kings ii. 34; 2 Chron. xxxiii. 20.

nected with the house, as the ground outside Jerusalem, in the gardens of the ruined houses, is meant by Nehemiah, when he calls the city "the place of my fathers' sepulchres."[1] Most of the kings were honoured by their tombs being inside the walls of their capital, whether at Jerusalem, Thirza, or Samaria. David, for example, and most of his descendants, were laid in a great royal tomb, in the "city of David," still remaining in the time of the apostles, and which may yet be brought to light again, from under the rubbish of many centuries, somewhere in the hill south of the Temple grounds, on which the "city of David" stood.[2]

The interior of Hebrew tombs differed in different cases. Some had hollows cut in their rough floor, for bodies; a stone covering each receptacle when filled. Others had square holes, the length of a corpse, pierced horizontally in their sides; the body being pushed in, apparently feet foremost, and the small front then sealed up. A third style was to make a number of hollows, large enough to hold a body, along the sides of the excavation, the corpse being, thus, laid on a stone shelf, with rock above it; while some were hewn into troughs, in a shelf left about two feet above the floor, the rock over these being cut away, and the body laid in the stone bed thus formed. The outside entrance, in all cases, was closed by a great stone, or a stone door. One can enter any old tomb, now; the protecting stone or door having long vanished, and the interior, in all, being that of a level chamber, larger or smaller. Some, indeed, open into many chambers; the so-called Tombs of the Prophets, on the south-west of the

[1] Neh. ii. 3.
[2] 1 Kings ii. 10; xi. 43, etc.; xvi. 6, 28, etc.; 2 Chron. xxi. 20; Acts ii. 20.

Mount of Olives, extending, in four passages of from thirteen to nineteen yards each, deep into the hill; the outermost passage, which is almost semi-circular, containing about twenty-four places for bodies, hewn the length of a corpse into the rock, and just large enough for one entering them. The excavation is a fine specimen of an ancient Jewish tomb of a high class, but has no claim to any connection with the age of the prophets.

The so-called Tombs of the Kings, again, which date from the generation after Christ, are an imposing creation; forming, in fact, a grand mansion for the dead, approached by a broad flight of steps, and a broad court, 30 yards long and 27 yards wide, hewn out of the rock, as are the steps. The richly carved front of the tombs, with one door, forms the inner side of this court. Behind it is a vestibule, from which open a whole series of sepulchral chambers, once closed by stone doors; the entire excavation, of course, having been made in the living rock. It is probable that this wonderful home of the dead was prepared for Izates, the son of Queen Helena of Adiabene, an Assyrian territory north of the site of Nineveh, who became a Jewess in her own country, and resided in Jerusalem after the death of her husband in A.D. 48. As her son had twenty-four sons, and we know not how many daughters, the great size of the tomb may be explained by his extensive family requirements. A third tomb of great extent, at Jerusalem, is known as the Tombs of the Judges, though the legend that the judges were buried in it is only modern. Ten chambers, the sides of most of which are lined with square openings, hid away the corpses in the rock; the whole excavation dates only from later Jewish times, after Christ, but, however, before the fall of Jerusalem.

It is curious to notice the difference in the construction of the tombs in Phœnicia, the great neighbour-land of the Hebrews, and that whose customs they largely followed. The chambers, and the places for bodies, are alike in both, but while the Jew hewed out his tomb in the side of a slope, so that it could be entered at once, and shewed the receptacles of the dead round a chamber on a level with the entrance, the Phœnicians, like the Egyptians, sank a perpendicular shaft, at the bottom of which they excavated the true tomb-chamber, letting down the sarcophagus through the shaft, and, finally, after the body had been laid in it, filling up the shaft with stones, and hiding the mouth by a stone block, fitted so carefully into the opening that there was no trace of it after a little rubbish had gathered. The horror at the thought of a violation of the grave, felt by the Hebrews, receives a vivid light from such extraordinary caution in protecting Phœnician tombs, but even this is made stronger by inscriptions found in two, opened, in late years, at Sidon. On the sarcophagus hidden in the one, we read: "Come not to open my grave, for it contains neither gold, nor silver, nor treasures. Whoever opens this tomb shall have no prosperity under the sun, and shall find no rest in his own sepulchre." It is the tomb of Tabnite, priest of Astarte, and King of Sidon, father of the poor royalty who lay in the second sarcophagus, in his own tomb—Eshmunazer, like his father, King of Sidon. He appears to have lived about two hundred years before Christ, and to have reigned, as a vassal of the Ptolemies, as far south as Joppa. The inscription on his father's tomb and on his own shews that Shakespeare was not the first who pronounced a curse upon those who should move his bones. Part of it runs

thus:—A curse is pronounced against royal persons or others "who shall open this tomb, or lift the tomb which contains me, or transport me in this tomb. They shall not be buried with the dead, they shall not lie in a tomb, they shall not leave any descendants, and the holy gods will deliver them into the hands of their enemies, who will chase them from their country." The *Jewish World* notes, as a curious coincidence in regard to this curse, that the Duke de Luynes bought the sarcophagus, and presented it to the French Government. He and his only son met their deaths in the Papal War, in Italy, in 1859. Again, it was through the instrumentality of the Emperor Napoleon III. that it was brought to Paris, and deposited in the Louvre. He was routed at Sedan, and his body reposes on foreign soil. His son met with an untimely death, far away from his home, and at the hands of his enemies. There is not a descendant left of Napoleon III. or of the Duke de Luynes.

CHAPTER XVII.

IMMORTALITY BROUGHT TO LIGHT.[1]

THE clear and direct announcement by our Lord that "the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done ill, unto the resurrection of judgment," was the authoritative proclamation of the doctrine of man's immortality, held, already, in that day by the Pharisees, but resting on no unquestioned statement of their sacred books, though correctly deduced from many parts of them. Even now, the Jew[2] has to assume that it must have been known to Moses, from his education at the court of Pharaoh, and his supreme eminence as a prophet "whom the Lord knew face to face."[3] The question, however, is not whether he knew of a future state, but whether he revealed it to his people. It is admitted that he held out only promises for this life, as the motive to duty, but this is explained as inevitable, from the grossness of the people, to whom the doctrine of a world to come would have had no attractions.

But, surely that would have been the greater reason for his disclosing to them a vision of higher aims and nobler prospects, than the sordid hope of material advantage, for

[1] John v. 28, 29.

[2] "The Teaching of Moses on Immortality," by M. E. Roller.—*Congrès International des Orientalistes de* 1873.

[3] Deut. xxxiv. 10.

doing right. The text quoted by our Lord to silence the Sadducees, who maintained that immortality was not taught by "Moses,"[1] though it is still the standing proof of this with the Samaritans, is not mentioned by M. Roller. "But as touching the dead, that they are raised," said Christ; "have ye not read in the book of Moses, in the place concerning the Bush, how God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but of the living: ye do greatly err." Apart, however, from this exposition of Christ, who would have seen immortality in these words? They are, at least, very far from a direct intimation of the great truth. "Let Reuben live, and not die,"[2] is gravely quoted by modern rabbis, as a proof of a future life! So is the text, "I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal"![3] and it is even found in the desire of the ancient Hebrews to be laid in the family tomb, which they called being "gathered to their people," or, as Jacob expressed it, being "buried with their fathers."[4] But, since this is the most that can be put forward in the matter, it cannot be held that the religious creed of the Jew, as embodied in the "Law," was in any sense clear in its revelations of a future world. Nor is the voice of the Old Testament, as a whole, much more distinct, for Christ is said to have "brought life and immortality to light," which implies that it had not been so before. Thus, in the 88th Psalm, which is ascribed to various dates, from the age of Solomon to the time just before the Maccabees, it is asked respecting God: "Wilt thou do wonders (miracles) with the dead? Shall the shades rise up and praise Thee?

[1] Exod. iii. 6; Mark xii. 26, 27.
[2] Deut. xxxiii. 6.
[3] Deut. xxxii. 39.
[4] Gen. xlix. 29, 33.

Shall Thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? Or Thy faithfulness in Sheol? Shall Thy wonders be known in (the land of) darkness? And Thy righteousness in the land of oblivion?"[1] Yet, from very early times, the thought of death, as not only the natural end of life, but also the punishment of sin; the instinctive love of life in man as in all other creatures; and the tenderness of natural affections, which could not believe that the loved dead were no longer in existence, peopled the under-world with shades; as imagination and fear had already filled the air, and the earth at large, with many kinds of spirits. Such a conception of the lot of man beyond the grave, had been familiar to the Hebrews, as that of the Akkadian race, from amidst whom their ancestors had come, when they left Mesopotamia.

A description of the subterranean kingdom of Sheol, or Hades, as imagined by that early people, is given in the great miracle-play of the Descent of Istar into Hades, of which the scene is the city of Cutha, the necropolis of Chaldæa. The abode of the dead is described as a ruined and deserted city. The palaces, dark and dreary, are peopled with disembodied spirits, clad in bird-like robes of feathers, who flit to and fro, feeding on mud and dust, and shunning the light of day. It is also the abode of the three beings who preside over death—Dibbara, or Destruction; Ariu, the god of war; and Laz, the goddess of famine. Dibbara is, especially, the pestilence. His companion is Isuv, the burning flame of fever—apparently the demon of pestilent winds. In a statue in the Louvre, he is represented as having four wings, the body of a man, the claw-like feet of a gryphon, and, for a head, a half-decayed,

[1] Ps. lxxxviii. 10-12.

parched skull.[1] Elsewhere, the spirits of the dead are imagined as keeping watch over boundless heaps of gold.[2] But all ideas about the ghost-world were necessarily vague and shadowy; so that, at times, it seems as if the spirits in it were those of the innumerable objects of nature, rather than of men. In it rose the golden throne of Anunas, erected by the spirits of the earth, hard by the waters of life, which they were appointed to guard. At first, the gods lived in these vast underground regions, but, after a time, they ascended to the skies. Sheol, henceforward, was left to the shades of men, but they sometimes escaped from it, to prey on the living. The ghosts of great kings and heroes of old sat in this dark and awful region, each on his throne, crowned and terrible; rising, at times, to greet some mighty one of earth whose shade was coming to join them. The grand passage in Isaiah, which describes the entrance of the king of Babylon to the under-world,[3] shews that the conceptions of the poets of Mesopotamia had found their way to Palestine. The seven gates of these sunless realms lie at the head of as many roads to them, each guarded by its porter, who admits the dead, after stripping him of his earthly clothing; but, once within the gate, there is no return to the light of day. Good and bad, heroes and common people, alike wander through these gloomy depths; for a system of future rewards and punishments had not, as yet, been elaborated among the early Chaldæans. Moral responsibility, with them, ended at death. Sheol was a land of forgetfulness and of darkness, where the good and evil deeds of this life are remembered no more. Its population are mere shadows of men who

[1] *Babylonian and Oriental Records*, i. 13, 14.
[2] Sayce, Hibbert Lectures, III.
[3] Isa. xiv.

had once lived, retaining only such a dim consciousness as we might ascribe to the creations of a dream. The world of the dead seems, indeed, to have been largely the same in all ancient nations, for the Hades of the Homeric poems and of the Old Testament is substantially identical with that of the early nations of Mesopotamia. Yet, alike on the Euphrates and in Palestine, side by side with this miserable conception of the world beyond the grave, the beginnings of nobler and higher ideas were gradually shewing themselves. As soon as the gods had been transferred to the heavens, the thinkers of these far-off times began to dream of a nobler future for man also. Faint preludes of the doctrine of immortality charmed men's minds, and with them rose the idea of future rewards and punishments. Sacrifice for sin, which implies vicarious suffering, was already familiar to the Chaldæan, and, thus, all that was needed was to transfer the same system of rewards for goodness, and penalties for sin, as obtained in this life, to that which followed it. Still, the imagery surrounding death was very gloomy. He was the "shepherd," and mankind the flock which he drives to his dark pastures, and thus, as kings were often painted as shepherds, he was, in fact, the king of the whole earth ; with man, in all ages and lands, for his helpless subjects. Both Chaldæans and Hebrews applied this image to the last enemy. Their kings were their shepherds in one sense, but death was the "head shepherd" of humanity ; the terrible king of kings, whom sultan and slave must alike follow to the pale kingdoms.

It is striking to follow the Bible allusions to these mysterious realms. When they had gone down into "the pit," God remembered men no more.[1] Sheol was the "deepest

[1] Ps. lxxxviii. 5.

depth;" deeper than the waters of the abyss that "couch beneath" the earth; the vast ocean from which well out rivers and springs.[1] "The shades," says Job, "tremble beneath the waters and their inhabitants. Sheol is naked before God, and the place of Destruction has no covering" from His eyes.[2] It is "a land of thick darkness, as darkness itself; a land of the thickest darkness, like that of death; a land without any order, and where the light is as darkness;" that is, where, when it is brightest, it is like midnight, and where all forms and shades fade, chaos-like, one into the other.[3] It is quite distinct from the grave, for Jacob says "he will go down to Sheol, to his son, mourning," though he believed that Joseph had been devoured by wild beasts.[4] Yet, in poetry, the characteristics of the grave are transferred to Sheol, as where Isaiah says of the king of Babylon, when he had gone down to the realms of death, "the worm is spread under thee, and worms cover thee;"[5] though the body of the fallen great one had been thrown out, unburied.[6] The expression, to be "gathered to their fathers or people," though often meaning to be laid in the tomb with one's own relatives, has not always this sense, for it is used of some who were not buried with their race; as, for example, of Abraham, Moses, and David,[7] and must, therefore, mean, gathered to them in Sheol. Strange to say, the corpse is, at times, supposed to have sensibility, as where Isaiah speaks of "the carcases of transgressors" as suffering from "their worm which shall not die, and their fire that is unquenchable."[8] The shades in the land of oblivion[9] move about powerless, or rest as if sleeping,

[1] Deut. xxxiii. 13. [2] Job xxvi. 5. [3] Job x. 22.
[4] Gen. xxxvii. 35. [5] Isa. xiv. 11. [6] Isa. xiv. 19.
[7] Gen. xxv. 8; Deut. xxxi. 16; 1 Kings ii. 10. [8] Isa. lxvi. 24.
[9] Ps. lxxxviii. 12.

in unbroken silence.[1] "The living," says The Preacher, "know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Their love, their hatred, and their envy, have long ago perished, and they have no more part, for ever, in any thing that is done under the sun. For there is no work, no devising, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in Sheol, whither thou goest."[2] There is, nowhere, any mention of a separation between the good and the bad. "They have no more any reward." The dead can no longer praise God, nor occupy themselves with the contemplation of His works or glory. "In death there is no remembrance of thee: in Sheol who shall give thee thanks?" cries one Psalmist.[3] "What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit?" wails another. "Shall the dust praise thee? Shall it declare thy truth?"[4] "Shall the shades arise and praise thee?" asks a third.[5] "The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence," is the lament of a fourth;[6] but in none of these plaintive laments is there a gleam of hope of a future life.

Yet the power of the Almighty reaches the gloomy regions which they inhabit, for the Psalmist tells us, "If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there,"[7] but the dead have no comforting relations with Him.[8] Still, consciousness is not suspended so as not to be readily waked;

[1] Ps. xciv. 17; cxv. 17. [2] Eccles. ix. 5, 6, 10.

[3] Ps. vi. 5. This psalm appears to date from the age of Jeremiah—just before the Exile.

[4] Ps. xxx. 9 Kuenen gives this psalm its earliest assigned date: holding it to have been written about 100 years after Hezekiah.

[5] Ps. lxxxviii. 10-12. This psalm is of comparatively late date.

[6] Ps. cxv. 17. This psalm is held even by Delitzsch to date from after the Exile.

[7] Job xxvi. 6; Ps. cxxxix. 8; Prov. xv. 11. [8] Ps. lxxxviii. 4-8.

for the shades are represented by Isaiah, as moved to meet the king of Babylon, and as addressing him in bitter contempt, at his being brought down to the grave, as he had brought so many, and Ezekiel paints the reception of Pharaoh, after death, in similar imagery, while Samuel is described as retaining his full identity when raised to meet Saul.[1] Between the dead below and the world of the living, it was held, no intercourse was maintained. "As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away," says Job, "so he that goeth down to Sheol shall come up no more."[2]

Hence, necromancy, our modern "Spiritualism," a widely spread superstition in ancient Israel, as it was, indeed, among all ancient races, is strongly forbidden by the Mosaic Law.[3] In the vast kingdom of the dead, the Hebrews naturally found "the house of meeting, appointed for all the living,"[4] where the lot of all is alike. "There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest. There the prisoners are at ease together; they hear not the voice of the task-master. The small and the great are there; and the slave is free from his lord."[5] Moreover, as I have said, they are separated into their races and families, as Samuel shews when he tells Saul that, "to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me."[6] A colourless existence like that of Sheol might be rest to the man wearied of life, but to one full of vigour it seemed a terrible calamity, as we see in the horror with which Hezekiah regarded death. No expectation of future bliss, like that which we entertain, illuminated the dark descent to the "pit" among the Hebrews, for even the prayer of

[1] 1 Sam. xxviii. 15; Isa. xiv. 10; Ezek. xxxii. 21.
[2] Job vii. 9.
[3] Lev. xix. 31; Deut. xviii. 9, etc.
[4] Job xxx. 23.
[5] Job iii. 17-19.
[6] 1 Sam. xxviii. 19.

Balaam, that he might die the death of the righteous, was only a craving wish that he might, like the righteous in Israel, die "in peace, in a good old age."[1]

The future hope of the Jew was limited to his surviving in his posterity and in his enjoying the favour of God during this life; as we strikingly see, in the blessings foretold for their families, by the patriarchs Jacob and Joseph.[2] Yet the human heart yearns for immortality, and texts were, after a time, discovered, which were thought to imply it. It was hence that the fact of God being called the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob came to be held a clear proof of it, since "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."[3] The further fact that it is said of the Eternal: "He killeth and maketh alive: he bringeth down to Sheol and bringeth up,"[4] remembered in connection with the story of dead bodies being raised to life by prophets, gradually led to the doctrine of the resurrection. At first, it appears as a vivid figure of national restoration from extreme depression. "After two days," says Hosea, of the northern kingdom, "will he revive us: on the third day," that is, in a short time, "he will raise us up, and we shall live before him;"[5] and, in another place, "I will ransom them from the hand of Sheol; I will redeem them from death."[6] Isaiah, once and again, uses the same grand image of renewed national life;[7] and Ezekiel, in the vision of the valley of dry bones, which live again when the breath of the Almighty passes over them,[8] and in other places, shews that the idea of the resurrection of the dead, in a literal sense, was gaining a firm hold of

[1] Gen. xv. 15; Num. xxiii. 10.
[2] Gen. xlix.; l. 24.
[3] Luke xx. 38.
[4] 1 Sam. ii. 6.
[5] Hos. vi. 2.
[6] Hos. xiii. 14.
[7] Isa. xxv. 7, 8; xxvi. 19.
[8] Ezek. xxxvii.

the general mind, though, as yet, this had not been put forward as it was afterwards.

Still, the passages I have quoted from psalms, dating, in some cases, within perhaps two hundred years of Christ, shew how very slowly the light rose, over the world beyond the grave. Individuals, however, like the author of Job, even amidst the prevailing darkness, must have had at least intermittent hopes of immortality; for, if some verses breathe only sadness in the anticipation of death, others are very much more confident that a life beyond will repair the sorrows of this world.[1] In Ecclesiastes, written long after the Exile, we find the same alternation of view respecting the future. "Who knoweth the spirit of man," it asks, "whether it goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast, whether it goeth downward to the earth?"[2] "In the grave," it tells us, "there is no work, nor devising, nor knowledge, nor wisdom."[3] Yet he afterwards says that at death the spirit returns to God who gave it, while the dust returns to the earth as it was.[4] In Daniel, which, in its present form, dates from the second century before Christ, the belief in a future life, as might be expected, is much clearer. Speaking of a time of deep trouble of the nation it says,[5] "At that time thy people shall be delivered; every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise (the teachers) shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." But Daniel speaks only of Israel:

[1] Job vii. 7–10; x. 20–22; xix. 25–27. [2] Eccles. iii. 21.
[3] Eccles. ix. 10. [4] Eccles. xii. 7. [5] Dan. xii. 1, 2.

the resurrection of mankind as a whole was reserved for the revelation of immortality in its fulness by Christ. Strange to say, in "The Wisdom of Solomon," "Ecclesiasticus," "Tobit," and "Judith," which all date from the second century before Christ, there is no similar expectation of immortality, nor do we find it strongly held earlier than the second book of the Maccabees, which is as late as the century immediately before our Lord. In it a Jewish martyr says, "Thou takest us out of the present life, but the King of all shall raise us up, who have died for his laws, unto everlasting life."[1] It was left to Christ to pronounce, with an authority which made it, thenceforward, the accepted creed of humanity, that we do not all die, but that the dead, small and great, must answer before God, for the deeds done in the body, and suffer or be rewarded accordingly. Nor must it be thought that the doctrine had been added to the popular faith so generally, in the time of Christ, that He only repeated what the men of His day already held; for in the book of Baruch, written after the fall of Jerusalem, we find it said that "the dead that are in the graves will give unto the Lord neither praise nor righteousness."[2] So slowly did the Jews, as a race, realize that man had a life beyond this.

NOTE.—I have quoted Ecclesiastes as implying our immortality where it speaks of "the spirit returning to God who gave it;" but it is, perhaps, more in keeping with the ideas of the time when it was written, to understand these words, simply of the life, or spirit, which God had given, being yielded up again to Him, as now His once more, and no longer ours. "The spirit," in fact, is only the "life," not "the soul;" for which the Hebrews had no word.

[1] 2 Macc. vii. 9. See also verses 11, 14, 28; xii. 43, 44, etc.; xiv. 46.
[2] Bar. ii. 17.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE TWELVE APOSTLES.

As time passed, and the number of the disciples increased, it was possible for Christ to add to the small band of immediate followers whom He had already gathered. Peter and Andrew, John and James, of whom I have spoken in earlier chapters, were joined by eight others, selected by the Master, to make up the number of twelve. This was, no doubt, in allusion to the twelve tribes of ancient Israel, which the nation still fondly remembered, though tribal distinctions had long since disappeared almost entirely; only three or four tribes claiming to have preserved their separate integrity even at the time of our Lord.

It was a characteristic of the rabbis, that each gathered round him a greater or smaller band of "disciples," selected by himself to the honour of this special intimacy, and that these "followed" him, in his passing to and from his lecture-room, and on other occasions. This usage still survives among the Brahmins in India; the same summons to "follow" them being, even now, the recognized form of invitation to become members of the inner circle of their disciples, as in the days of Christ. In a more general way, a sample of His invitations to a miscellaneous audience, is given by St. Matthew,[1] in the immortal words, **"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden,**

[1] Matt. xi. 28-30.

and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light;" words which may be amplified thus: "Come unto Me, all ye that are toiling and bending under the heavy load of the requirements of the rabbis, and are, still, oppressed by a sense of guilt before God; Come, and I will give you that rest you seek in vain from them; I will free you from this weary toil and this heavy burden. Take My yoke upon you, make Me your teacher, and learn from Me; follow My counsels, and imitate My life. Your rabbis speak of 'the yoke of the Law,' and of 'the yoke of the kingdom of heaven,' so you know My meaning. I am not cold and haughty as they are, even when they most affect gentleness and humility, but am in heart, that is, sincerely, meek and lowly, and being so, ye will find, as My disciples, the inner rest for which you sigh. For My requirements are easy to follow; the only burden I lay upon you being the light one, of love to God and man, from a humble devout soul."

The eight disciples advanced to the apostolate just before the Sermon on the Mount, are always grouped in pairs. As Peter and James are mentioned together, so are John and Andrew. The third pair are Philip and Thomas; the fourth, Bartholomew and Matthew; the fifth, James the son of Alphæus and Simon the Zealot; the sixth, Judas the brother of James, or, as he is called in Jude,[1] his "brother," and Judas Iscariot, who, in the end, betrayed his Master. Of these, Philip, as we have already seen, was from Bethsaida, now, probably, represented by the sweet spot of which I have already spoken, on the Lake of Gali-

[1] Jude 1.

lee, known as Ain Tabigah, where a swift deep brook rushes, through overhanging oleanders and other boscage, to the lake; a mill standing at its side, picturesque and old, while huge remains of ancient dams and reservoirs, for irrigation, rise in the near background. In Christ's day, a flourishing village, given, like the places round it, to fishing, appears to have stood here, with the apostle Philip for one of its cottagers till called to follow Jesus. He is mentioned, after his choice as an apostle, only by St. John, in the narrative of the miraculous feeding, of the Greeks who wished to see Jesus, and in the story of our Lord's last discourse.[1] Tradition assigns him Scythia, as the scene of his labours, painting him as attracting many to Christianity by his miracles and preaching. In his later years, he is said to have lived at Hierapolis, in Phrygia; then a rich, populous, and idolatrous city. There, he is alleged to have attacked the worship of a serpent-image, of huge size and immense fame, and to have won many to forsake it, but at the cost of his own life; its worshippers putting him to death by hanging, or, perhaps, crucifixion. He left no writings behind him, so far as is known, though a forged Gospel, said to have been his, is mentioned as in use among some of the early Gnostic sects.

The apostle Bartholomew is mentioned only on the occasion of his designation to his high office, but there seems no reasonable doubt, that he was the guileless Nathanael, who was brought to Christ by Philip, at the very opening of our Lord's ministry. The incident is recorded by St. John, who does not mention Bartholomew in speaking of the apostles, while the other evangelists never mention Nathanael; apparently from both names referring to the

[1] John vi. 5; xii. 21; xiv. 8.

same person. In St. John, Philip and Nathanael come, together, to Christ; in the other Gospels, Philip and Bartholomew are always named together. Bartholomew, indeed, hardly seems his proper surname, but rather corresponds to "Bar Jona," the son of Jona, or "Bar Timæus," the son of Timæus, of whom we hear elsewhere. We read of "Joseph, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas,"[1] "the son of exhortation," doubtless from his gift of popular public speech; and Bartholomew, which means "the son of Tolmai," may well have been used, from the Eastern custom of honouring a father by giving his name to his son, while Nathanael would be the son's own name. He was a villager of Cana of Galilee, but we know nothing of his calling in life, though it does not seem probable that one living far from the lake could have been a fisherman, like so many of the apostles. We may take it for granted, however, that he was of the same lowly social rank as the others whom Christ gathered round Him for His immediate attendants. He is mentioned, apart from the story of his being brought to Christ by Philip, only on the occasion of the third appearance of their Lord to His apostles, after His resurrection, when He shewed Himself on the shore of the lake, in the gray dawn, and vouchsafed to grant the weary band, who had been out all night but had caught nothing, a great netful, in a single sweep made at His command. Among those present, we are told, were Peter, Thomas, and Nathanael, who had thus continued to associate with his old friends among the apostles, as one of them; helping them in their lowly calling, which he could readily do, if, as may be supposed, he was only a working peasant. It is striking that so little should be told of one

[1] Acts iv. 36.

so highly commended by Christ, for we cannot doubt that both during the Master's life, and after His death, so faithful a spirit was a true servant, ever zealous to honour his Lord. Only uncertain traditions, however, remain, of his career as an apostle; India being named as the scene of his labours. In his old age, he is said to have returned to Asia Minor, to join Philip at Hierapolis in Phrygia, but on the martyrdom of that apostle, he fled, we are told, to Armenia. Here, the tradition continues, he ended his days by martyrdom; some telling us that he was crucified with his head downwards; others, that he was skinned alive; which, indeed, was in some cases a first stage in the horrors of crucifixion.

St. Matthew was one of the hated and despised body of publicans, or collectors of taxes and custom dues, for the Romans. His bearing, also, the name of Levi, shews that he belonged to the sacerdotal tribe, which would make his serving the Romans a still fouler outrage, in the eyes of his countrymen. That Christ should have shewn kindly feeling towards such a class of social outcasts, must have prejudiced the Jews very much against him as a religious teacher; but, that He should have gone so far as to make one of its members an intimate friend and attendant, would seem an audacious outrage on universal public opinion, sufficient to make the whole bigoted community of His countrymen, His fierce enemies. Matthew was the local collector at Capernaum, under the "farmer-general" of the imposts of the district. He must have been noticed by Christ as an earnest hearer of His discourses to the people, for, we are told, he gave up his office at once, on a summons by Jesus to follow Him. So great liberality as to invite a publican to join the inner circle of His com-

pany, was an event in the history of his class which filled both him and them with the liveliest gratitude. Treated, till then, as a moral outlaw, shunned by the religious world as too vile for recognition, the honour paid him waked in his bosom a long-crushed self-respect, and quickened his whole nature, to justify, by a worthy life, the good opinion of one who did not think even publicans outside the love and gracious good-will of the Eternal Father. To strengthen his reviving manhood in its resolution to lead a nobler life in the future than in the past, Jesus further defied the proprieties of His day, especially when His being looked upon as a rabbi is remembered, in attending with His disciples, a feast given by the new disciple, to his fellow-publicans and others of equally despised classes, to express his sense of the honour paid him and them, by our Lord. Yet, apart from this incident, and the mention of his name in the lists of apostles, Matthew is not alluded to in the Gospels, nor is anything clearly known of his future life, by the Fathers of the Church, except that he, like the other apostles, went as a missionary to distant lands. But what countries in particular enjoyed his labours, is not known; nothing remaining but a crowd of legendary stories. It seems most probable that he visited the regions east of the Euphrates, and finally sealed his faith by a martyr's death, though in what form he suffered is not certain. When or where the Gospel bearing his name was written, is entirely unknown; nor is it certain whether it was written originally in Hebrew or in Greek. There is, indeed, a strong body of evidence that there was a Hebrew Gospel, but no one who speaks of it ever saw it, and it was in the end allowed to perish.

On the other hand, the Greek Gospel which we have

was regarded from the earliest ages as no mere translation, but as a genuine apostolic composition. It seems, indeed, that the Hebrew Gospel may have been a writing bearing the name of St. Matthew, but put together by some of the sects into which the Church of the first century ultimately, to a sad extent, split up. It is at least certain, that the "Nazarenes" or "Ebionites," two Christian sects which held the Law of Moses to be still binding, boasted of a Gospel by St. Matthew; and it is not at all improbable that the Fathers who speak of a Hebrew Gospel, refer to this, or some other spurious production, circulated by such Jewish Christian sects, to give their peculiar tenets a seeming apostolic authority. In fact, it is a very unsettled question whether there ever was a really apostolic Hebrew Gospel, and we may fairly hold to the Greek one we possess, as an original apostolic work, and not a mere translation, with modifications of admitted authority. As to the time when "Matthew" was written, there is no certainty; some maintaining that it is as early as the eighth year after the Ascension; others, that it was composed fifteen years after that event, while still others hold that it was written while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome, and a fourth set of critics think it dates from the time of St. Matthew's leaving Palestine. Most probably, it was written between the years 50 and 60, after Christ's birth, but it is impossible to speak more definitely. Its purpose is evident from its contents, which shew that it was intended to convince Jewish readers, in Palestine and elsewhere, that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah promised in the Old Testament.

The name of the Apostle Thomas shews that he was a twin, for that is its meaning in Aramaic, while Didymus is the same thing in Greek. In the lists of the apostles in

the first three Gospels, he is always named along with Matthew,[1] while in one text[2] that apostle is called "the son of Alphæus," and in each of the lists the name of Thomas is followed by that of James the son of Alphæus. It has, hence, been fancied that he and Matthew were twin brothers, and children of the same father as James. He was, no doubt, a Jew, and, in all probability, a Galilean; born, it has been said, of very humble parents, and brought up as a fisherman, but, like other Jews of that age, well trained in the Hebrew Scriptures. Grave, and inclined to look on the dark side of things, he was yet strong in his affection, and firm in his loyalty to Christ, as is well shewn in the brave devotion and swift decision with which he spoke out, when it was found that Jesus had resolved to go into the jaws of danger, by returning to Judæa after the death of Lazarus. "If he will go, do not let us forsake Him: let us also go, that, if needs be, we may die with Him."[3] Frank and straightforward, he interrupts his Master in His farewell discourse, when he does not fully understand a part of it. Jesus had told His disciples that there was no ground for their being afraid, though He should be taken from them, since He was going to God, to prepare a place for them in the many mansions of His Father's house; adding "and whither I go, ye know the way." Slow to catch the meaning of these words, Thomas, unwilling to seem to know where he did not, asks at once, "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; how know we the way?" a difficulty which Christ solved for him and us all, by telling him that He was going to the Father, and that the way to Him was by being like Himself, for, said He, "I am the

[1] Matt. x. 3; Mark iii. 18; Luke vi. 15. [2] Mark ii. 14.
[3] John xi. 16.

way, the truth, and the life." The honest caution and sincerity of the apostle's mind was no less shewn by his hesitation to believe in the resurrection of his Master until it had been indisputably proved. But the evidence once shewn, he knows nothing of further cold and questioning hesitation; Jesus is, henceforth, with him, "my Lord and my God." He had not supposed his brethren deceiving him, in their belief that the Lord had risen, and had appeared to Simon, but they might easily have been themselves deceived by their excited fancies; mistaking a vision, for Christ's bodily presence. Thomas, however, loved Him too dearly, and sorrowed over his loss too acutely, to be consoled with anything less than clear proof; and such a spirit naturally received from our Lord the amplest satisfaction of its loving wish.

Our last glimpse of him in the Gospels is on the Sea of Galilee, when the risen Christ shewed Himself to the apostles in the gray dawn, after they had toiled fruitlessly through the night; throwing out and pulling in their nets for long hours, with no result. From this incident it would seem as if he, and those named with him, had lived together; gaining their bread, like Nathanael, at least for the time, by joining Peter in fishing. After the Ascension, there is only one notice of him, his name being joined with that of Philip, as frequenting the "upper chamber" in which the other apostles lived, and kept their zeal and love fervent by religious exercises.[1] Tradition has left us various alleged details respecting his after life. He is said to have been born in Antioch, and to have preached in Parthia, finding his grave at last in Edessa; but a later version makes him labour among the Medes and Persians also,

[1] Acts i. 13.

and to have baptized the three kings who had come to Bethlehem with gifts to the infant Jesus. His sphere was, indeed, early extended still farther to the east; India being added to it. One tradition tells us that he was put to death there by a lance thrust, at the command of the king, and that his bones were carried to Edessa, and after a time to Italy. The Syrian Christians in India call themselves Thomas-Christians to this day, in the belief that their Church was founded by him; but the name of India was anciently given, vaguely, to very different parts, and it appears certain that the apostle is not to be regarded as having visited Malabar; Christianity having, rather, spread gradually east, from Persia, by the migrations of Christians from that country to the Indian Peninsula. How little we know of the men to whom the world owes most! Let us, at least, be thankful that we have in Thomas a representative of the modern spirit of reverent criticism; a spirit which, very possibly, at times led a thoughtful mind like his, inclined to question and to look on the dark side, into dangerous perplexity, but in the end built up a faith deep and immovable, because founded on intelligent conviction.

The next apostle in the sacred list—James the Less—illustrates, even more strikingly than the others, how little we know of these founders of Christendom, for there is quite a controversy whether he was the same as James the Righteous, famous as the head of the Church at Jerusalem, or a third bearer of the name. It seems to be the opinion of the latest students, that James the Righteous was a brother of our Lord, and that James the Less, the son of Alphæus, was no relative of the Saviour. It has been held that "Mary of Klopas," who stood by the cross, was the

person meant by the words preceding her name—"his mother's sister," but it is very improbable that two sisters would each be called Mary. "Klopas," moreover, has been alleged to be virtually the same as Alphæus, but this rests on a mistaken analogy between the two words; the Aramaic Klopas not being really the counterpart of the Greek Alphæus. Nor is the idea that, even if this were conceded, Mary is to be regarded as the wife of Klopas, well grounded, for she may have been his daughter or his mother.[1] The reasons for holding that James the brother of our Lord, and James the Less, are not the same persons, may be summed up thus: 1. Supposing it were allowed that James the Less was the son of Klopas and a sister of the Virgin Mary, and thus the cousin of Christ, the Greek word used can mean only "brother," not "cousin," for which, indeed, there is a different word. 2. We are told, moreover,[2] that Christ's brethren did not believe on Him in His lifetime, and therefore none of them could have been an apostle. Jesus, Himself, indeed, expressly tells those who were "offended in Him," from knowing His early calling in Nazareth and the members of His family, that "A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house."[3] 3. The "brethren" of Jesus are, in the Acts and Epistles, expressly distinguished from the "apostles,"[4] and this is corroborated by the weighty tradition that James the Lord's brother was not an apostle, but, at most, perhaps one of the seventy; a tradition of the highest antiquity, which is incomprehensible, when we remember the great veneration in which James was held, and the reverence paid

[1] John xix. 25.
[2] John vii. 5.
[3] Mark iii. 21, 31–35; vi. 4.
[4] Acts i. 14; 1 Cor. ix. 5.

to the apostolic office, unless there had been good ground for it. 4. The "brethren of the Lord" are always mentioned in connection with the "mother of Jesus," never with "Mary of Klopas," which cannot be explained if they were the sons of the latter, and not of the former.[1] It seems clear, then, that James the Less, called so, perhaps, in contrast to still another James in the number of Christ's followers, was not the famous head of the Church at Jerusalem, but a worthy, who, like most of the twelve, is named, only to pass almost tracelessly from history. The one very doubtful glimpse of him we have, outside the Gospels, is the tradition that he laboured in south-west Palestine and Egypt, and was crucified at Ostrakine on the lower Nile.

The apostle next in the sacred lists is variously named; in Matthew he is called "Thaddæus" and "Lebbæus;" in Mark, "Thaddæus;" and in Luke, "Judas of James." He is expressly distinguished from Judas Iscariot in the farewell discourse of our Lord,[2] and as the word to be supplied before the "of James," in the Greek, is most naturally "son," it brings before us another James, otherwise entirely unknown. Some, indeed, would insert the word "brother," and make this Judas the brother of James the Less, or "younger," and thus regard him as a cousin of Christ; identifying him with the "brother of Jesus" of the same name, in the Gospels.[3] But, apart from other difficulties, the insertion of "brother," instead of "son," is contrary to the Greek usage. The two by-names, Lebbæus and Thaddæus, used instead of Judas by Matthew and Mark, are easily accounted for by the fact that such extra

[1] Matt. xii. 46; Mark iii. 31; vi. 3; John ii. 12.
[2] John xiv. 22.
[3] Matt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3.

names were very common among the Jews, from the fewness of the ordinary names current among them. The old tradition, from a Syrian source, in Eusebius, of the relations of Jesus to Abgarus, King of Edessa, appear to refer to this apostle. Abgarus, the legend tells us, sent to Christ, praying Him to let some one come, to cure him of a heavy sickness, and received, in reply, a letter from our Lord, saying that his request was heard and a disciple sent, and further, that, before long, salvation would be brought to him and all his relatives. After the Ascension, this was speedily fulfilled, for the apostle Thomas, moved of God, sent Thaddæus, one of the seventy, to Edessa, to instruct the king and his people in Christianity, which he did with great success. Eusebius further gives what is supposed to have been the letter of Abgarus to Christ, and our Lord's reply, but neither is of any historical value, both being, undoubtedly, only pious inventions, such as were then common.[1] There is some confusion of names, and Thaddæus is represented as one of the seventy, rather than an apostle, but the reference is seemingly to Judas (son of) James. Nothing is told in the New Testament, of this apostle, and it is quite unknown where he laboured or died, though tradition speaks of his having preached in Persia or Assyria, and ending his course as a martyr. But, if unrecorded on earth, we may be sure that his faithful toil was duly noted before the Eternal.

The apostle Simon the Cananæan, or Zealot, is still another of the almost unknown immediate followers of our Lord. How he got the by-name of "the zealot" is doubtful. The word Cananæan, used of him by Matthew and Mark, seems to mean "one born at Kana;" but Luke, in

[1] Eusebius, i. 13.

the Gospel and in the Acts, translates it "zealot," which is the meaning of the Aramaic word "Kannai," and seems adopted by him as the root of "Cananæan;" a play on the sound, after the Jewish custom, serving, perhaps, to indicate the double fact, that he was at once a native of Kana, and also a member of the extreme party of Jewish religionists. It is quite possible that Christ Himself may have given him this special name, as He called Simon, Peter; the fervour of this Simon's nature making it fitting. But it may have been, that he had belonged to the wild Pharisaic school of "zealots for the Law." The name was specially used of those who sympathized with the enthusiasm of Judas the Galilean, who rose against the change of Judæa into a Roman procuratorship, on the deposition of Archelaus, in the year 6 or 7 after Christ, and against the census ordered by the first Roman governor, Cyrenius. The insurrection thus excited was soon crushed, but the idea that the recognition of the Roman supremacy was treason against God, became the central article of their creed, to an extreme party among the Pharisees, who were therefore called Galileans or zealots. To oppose the contamination of Israel by any friendly relations with the foreigner, was their one passionate aim; Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron, being their ideal, because he thrust through with his spear Zimri and Cozbi, who had wrought defilement in the tribes; his fierce violence obtaining for him the praise of being "zealous for his God, and of having made an atonement for the children of Israel," on account of which the plague that was raging in the camp was divinely stayed.[1] Their forerunners had, already, before the birth of Christ, appeared in those youths, who, under Herod the Great,

[1] Num. xxv. 6-15.

had torn down the Roman eagle which he had set up in the Holy City, and gloried when they were condemned to be burned alive by the exasperated tyrant.' This fanatical party proclaimed by its catch-words and stern allusions, which were at once easily understood by the masses, and popular, that God alone was King of the Jews, and that no man was to be called so; stirring up the mad bigotry of the nation, more and more, till the whole population became the blind instruments of its fury, during the last fatal war. That a member of such a body should have become an apostle of the meek and lowly Jesus, is a strange phenomenon, interesting as a proof that honest, though misdirected, zeal, brought under the influence of His gracious spirit, may become as enthusiastic in His service as it formerly was in ways the most opposite. Nor is Simon alone in this, for Paul tells us that he, too, was "beyond measure a zealot," till arrested and changed, when on the way to Damascus. Nothing is known about the life of Simon, outside the New Testament, though tradition has been busy respecting him; asserting that he wandered as far as Great Britain preaching the Gospel. But there is no authority for such a supposition.

Judas the man of Kerioth, that is "Iscariot," closes the list of the twelve. The awful story of his career and fall has been fully told in my "Life of Christ," but the problem of such a development of an apostolic training, in the very shadow of Christ Himself, is a very difficult one. De Quincey, borrowing from a German author, has advanced a theory which may be briefly stated in a condensation of his own words. Everything connected with our ordinary conceptions of Judas Iscariot's real purpose and scriptural

doom is, he tells us, erroneous, and everything traditionally accepted about him is false. That neither his motive nor ruling impulse was tainted with the vulgar treachery imputed to him, appears from his remorse. He shared in the common delusion of the apostles as to an earthly kingdom under Christ's auspices, and, so far, nothing warrants special wonder or separate blame. But he went beyond the other apostles, in speculating as to Christ's reasons for delay in openly taking steps to establish it. Believing that He contemplated restoring David's throne; that all conditions towards accomplishing such a scheme met and centred in Him; what—on any solution intelligible to Judas—neutralized so grand a scheme? Obviously, to him, Christ's character was sublimely gifted for speculation, but, like Hamlet's, not correspondingly endowed for action. Hence he fancied that indecision paralyzed Jesus, when summoned from contemplation to the gross necessities of action, and he therefore conceived it his duty to precipitate his Master into some popular movement, which could not be checked. He would be compromised before doubts could form. Judas's miscalculation hinged, not on political oversight, but on total spiritual blindness, in which, however, he went no further than his brethren. On them, as little as on him, had the true grandeur of the Christian scheme yet dawned. He only outran them in this, that sharing their blindness, he greatly exceeded them in presumption. Before the Crucifixion, they supposed the object of Christ's teaching, not to enforce a new religion, but to prepare for a pitiably vulgar scheme of earthly aggrandizement. Yet while they simply failed to comprehend their Master, Judas presumptuously assumed that he understood His purposes better than Christ Himself; but his object, though highly auda-

cious, was not treacherous. He believed himself executing Christ's very innermost purposes with an energy lacking in Christ; fancied his action fulfilled those great political changes which Christ approved, but wanted audacity to accomplish; hoped that, when actually arrested, Christ would no longer vacillate, but would be compelled to give the signal, and that the populace would then rise for the double purpose of placing Him at the head of an insurrection and of throwing off the Roman yoke. As to worldly prospects, Iscariot was probably right. As treasurer he had most worldly wisdom, was best acquainted with the temper of the times, and could not have blundered greatly as to the wishes of the people. A demonstration against Rome would doubtless have been made, had Christ encouraged it; but had there been such a rising, in connection with Him, we know, from the incompatibility of such political action with the primary purposes of Christ's mission, that Judas and the populace must equally have found themselves undeceived for ever. When Christ stood silent and allowed Himself to be condemned to the cross, the failure of the plan of Judas sank him in despair. Whether he had imbibed enough spiritual religion to understand the full meaning of Christ's refusal to head a popular movement, or still adhered to his worldly interpretation of Christ's mission, and thought the refusal a confession that all was lost, when on the brink of triumphant consummation, it is impossible to guess. To Judas all was indeed over. This world's kingdom had melted away, and to him it mattered little that a spiritual kingdom survived, for his heart had no spiritual organ which could appropriate the new and astounding revelation.

This theory, that Judas betrayed Jesus only to force His

hand, and get Him, at last, to carry out schemes of worldly policy, which He, Himself, had in view, but wanted decision to proclaim publicly, is open to fatal objections. The truer key to the terrible story seems to shew itself in the notices of his career, as revealed in the Gospels. Judas must have belonged to the limited band who "waited for the Consolation of Israel," that is, for the Messiah; and must, from this frame of mind, have connected himself with the Saviour. Noticed in the group of earnest disciples as specially eager to learn, Jesus may have taken him into the inner circle of His attendants, as an apostle, from perceiving that, besides a glowing enthusiasm for the Messianic regeneration of the Jewish nation, he had other characteristics, such as swift energy and a measure of business capacity, which might be of great use to the little company first gathered by the Saviour. The choice as apostle could only have resulted from a mutual attraction, by which, on the one side, Judas was drawn to the Galilean Teacher, and, on the other, Christ must have thought him more promising and devoted than many others whom He might have selected; for mere capacity could not have gained him the great honour of the apostolate. The gross conceptions of the Messianic kingdom he expected Christ to establish, with the selfish ambitions associated with this dream, were only the same as all the other apostles cherished; and Jesus doubtless looked to the purer and loftier ideal, brought daily before His circle as a whole, and enforced by His spirit and life, to correct such misconceptions. But, while the others surrendered their whole nature to His ennobling influence, Judas was only half-hearted in his Master's service, and illustrated the ever true saying, that "No man can serve two masters: for either he will

hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."[1] Nor can it be doubted, that the keen insight of Christ soon detected the shade in the character of the unfortunate man. Little by little, the covetousness, which was his bosom sin, grew on him. The only southern Jew among the Twelve, for all the rest were Galileans, the special vice of his race was rooted in his nature, making his hopes, in connection with the expected Messianic kingdom, daily more worldly, and opening wider opportunities of petty gain, in his relations to the Master. Day by day, along with the seed of God's word, the thorns of greed rose ever higher, till, in the end, they choked the teachings of Christ. And as in the favouring skies of the tropics, not only the noble fruit-tree, but the poisonous growth, flourishes with a vigour unknown to other regions, so in the daily presence of Jesus, against whose purifying influences he had to harden his heart, the moral corruption of the whole soul of Judas must have darkened, to a degree impossible for us to realize. The shadow of evil, thus constantly deepening, must have caught a gloomier blackness than before, from the day when the second great secession of disciples followed Christ's open announcement that He would have nothing to do with a political Messiahship.[2] By that time, Jesus had finally read the whole character of Iscariot, as "a devil," and His veiled intimation that such a being was included in the small band of the apostles, might well have been a healthful warning to the falling man, had he been able to feel the applicability of the words to him. We may be certain, however, that the pitying love of the Holy One still yearned to win back even "the son of perdition" to a

[1] Matt. vi. 24. [2] John vi. 66.

better life, for a whole succession of warnings, to just such cases as his, follow in the Gospels, from that time to the close of our Lord's career. The parables of the tares and the wheat, of the net which enclosed both good and bad fish; the earnest caution against causing "stumbling"—"Woe to that man through whom the occasion (of stumbling) cometh!"[1]—and, almost at the close of His life, the discourse about the man who came into the king's feast without a wedding garment, have all, of course, a general application, but were, none the less, earnest and solemn warnings to the disciple, who, especially, was in danger of cutting himself off from the kingdom of his Master. Nor were these words and efforts of Jesus, on his behalf, altogether without result, for the struggle between light and darkness, in the soul of Judas, was a long one. But the more clearly it shewed itself, as time ran on, that Jesus was not the Messiah he and the grossly-minded multitude of Israel expected, the more his covetousness kept whispering to the traitor, that it was no more than a just return for his having been, himself, betrayed, if he, in turn, betrayed his betrayer! Before long, the designed treachery might, perhaps, seem to his poisoned conscience only a means approved by the constituted authorities, and therefore unobjectionable, to bring to punishment one who had been guilty of a gross deception of the people. Thus, he might come, through overmastering greed and rage at disappointed hopes, to hide from himself the moral grandeur of Christ, and to look at Him with jaundiced eyes. He may have brought himself, indeed, to a moral blindness that hid the abyss, on the edge of which he was treading. Is it possible that his being the only Judæan in the band

[1] Matt. xviii. 7.

round our Lord; a Jew of the south among eleven Galileans, with whom he could have almost nothing in common, widened the gulf between him and Christ, by jealousy and dislike of the other apostles? For the mountaineers of the north were a very different race from the Hebrew of Judah; with a different pronunciation of the common speech of the country; a hatred of the narrow insulting bigotry which made the southern Jew regard himself as the aristocrat of the race, and despise the Galileans as rude provincials, living far from the Temple, with its awful holiness as the very dwelling-place of God; infinitely inferior to the men of Judah, whose home made them, as it were, the very body-guard round the Eternal. Near the Temple, the southern Jew was, also, at the fountain-head of the knowledge of the Law, and boasted of keeping it with a painful strictness, which made all far-off members of his people, almost too impure to be admitted to anything like equality with such Brahmins. It is only too probable, therefore, that in a circle of Galileans, Judas may have felt himself, from the first, more or less alone, and the mutual recognition of this may account for the constant repetition of the by-name Iscariot. And may it not be, that this false position left him, more than he otherwise would have been, without a friend, whose gentle cautions and loving counsels might have been of passing worth to the unhappy man, and have led him back to the right way, when he had yielded, in a measure, to his inward temptations to be untrue to his Master?

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

THE great truths of morality are no possession of any one race; the same principles of right conduct appearing in the religions of all nations, more or less fully and clearly. It would, indeed, be a sad thing, if any part of mankind had no light on the way through life, when we remember that they are all the children of a common God. But this must especially be true of a nation like the Jews, which has had in its sacred books, a much fuller disclosure of the foundations of religion and morality than other races, and has devoted itself to the study and illustration of these for thousands of years. Hence we may expect that, when Christ delivered the Sermon on the Mount, there would be many points in which He only repeated with Divine authority, what had already been urged by earlier teachers. That He proclaimed a far higher morality than had been enforced before, is, however, beyond question, and indeed is involved in the immeasurably loftier conception than had till then been known, of the loving relations alike towards God and man, demanded by true religion. Not a few passages in the Talmud, nevertheless, are interesting for the side light they throw on the higher religious thought amidst which our Lord found Himself. People were doubtless very much the same then, as now; some better, some worse. Religionists were, no doubt, as various

in their motives as we find them in our own day. Too many would be precise from self-interest, as with ourselves; others would parade a mock humility; others, an affected and overstrained purity; others, an exaggerated sanctity, equally hollow, superficial, self-conscious, and proud of its superior merits; others, not content with pluming themselves on having kept the whole of the revealed Law, sighed, like the ruler in the Gospel, for some extra command, the observance of which might add to a legal claim, already strong, to have eternal life, hereafter, of right, in the earthly kingdom of the Messiah, which the Jews of Christ's day expected. But there must have been not a few who served God from unselfish and humble love, however mingled it might be with the inevitable influences of the day, in some of its details of theology or practice.

It does not always follow that the author of fine sentiments illustrates them faultlessly in his own example, but, in charity, we must recognize the certainty that not a few, to whom we are indebted for beautiful utterances in the Talmud, were, themselves, a vindication of their sweetest words. For there are most noble sentences in that wonderful farrago of worth and worthlessness. "The Law," it tells us, "dwells in those who are lowly in heart; not in the proud." Isaiah is said to have compared the words of Scripture to "living waters," because "they, by their nature, seek the lowest place." We are told that "he who shews pity on his neighbour, on him will the Lord shew pity;" a charming sentiment, which is, however, marred when we remember that "a neighbour" was, to a Jew, not what it means to us, since Christ spoke the parable of the Good Samaritan,—but only a fellow-Jew; all mankind, besides, being "enemies." The school of Sham-

mai taught that "not merely the outward act, but the inward thought, makes a man guilty before God." But Shammai was the embodiment of harshness, in contrast to the gentle and greater souled Hillel. Thus, it was he who required even young children to fast through the whole day of Atonement, and took the roof off the chamber in which lay his daughter-in-law and her new-born son, to have a tent raised in its stead, that the two might keep the feast of Tabernacles. "Righteousness," with such a man, has a suspicious externalism about it, that makes all his fine words sound very hollow. "He who makes peace between his neighbours," we are told, "will not only inherit eternal life, but will not want a blessing even here." "Those," we read, "who, when persecuted, do not return the hatred shewn them, are meant in Scripture, when it says, 'Let all thine enemies perish, O Lord, but let them that love thee be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might.'" "The Light of the world" seems to have been a familiar name for a distinguished rabbi, though, indeed, it might naturally be used anywhere, for such a luminary. Nor was it a new name for God, when our Lord called Him "Our Father which art in heaven," for the rabbis had long before addressed Him in these words. But with them, it meant only the Father of the Jew; with Christ, the Father of all mankind.

The language in the Sermon on the Mount, about salt losing its savour, may be an allusion to a peculiarity of the salt used in the Temple services. The kind preferred by the priests was that brought from the Dead Sea, which had a strong odour of bitumen, and was, hence, thought to aid the quick burning up of the sacrifices, and to absorb moisture rapidly, while its smell helped to overpower the

heavy offensiveness of the burning flesh, which was often very oppressive. If left in a damp place, however, or exposed to heat, the saltness soon passed off, and the mass retained only an unpleasant taste—in other words, it lost its savour. Maundrell, indeed, has another explanation, though in some respects it agrees with this. At one place, he found salt dug from a very earthy bed of rocks, and needing careful separation, to make it of use. Left exposed to the rain and weather, all the salt was washed away from the impurities in which it had been mixed, so that what had once been salt became quite insipid. On the other hand, the salt referred to by our Lord has been said by some rabbinical scholars, to have been, really, bitumen, thrown up by the Dead Sea, and hence called "salt of Sodom;" salt enough being mixed in it, to supply what was needed by the Law, though it easily melted out, leaving the bitumen useless for sacred purposes.

A curious parallel may be drawn, between the language of our Lord, respecting the permanence of the moral law, and that of the rabbis, as to the exact preservation of its words. But in this case also, the contrast is greater than the resemblance, for while Christ proclaims the eternal obligation of the sacred commands, the rabbis speak only of the unchangeableness of its text. Thus we read in the Talmud, "God said, 'The letter Yod (the smallest of the Hebrew characters) complained before Me, that I had taken it away from the name Sarai, when the wife of Abraham was named Sarah. But when Joshua was born, the Yod was put back into his name.'" Originally Hoshea, it was made Jehoshua; the first letter being the previously omitted Yod. Another explanation, however, has been given of this insignificant matter. Yod stands for "ten," but

the soft "h," or "He" (ה), stands for "five," and we are gravely told that the missing "Yod" was made up, by God's putting one "He" into the new name of Sarah, and another into "Abraham," when it was lengthened from "Abram." Similar passages often occur, throwing vivid light on the ingenious trifling of the rabbinical pedants. The Yod, moreover, was a standing expression for smallness, and so was the "tittle," or petty ornament or bend, put at the top of some letters. To change one of these was to "destroy the world"! To illustrate this, an instance is given in which the substitution of the letter He (ה), for Heth (ח), changes the meaning of a verse, from "Thou shalt not profane My holy name" into "Thou shalt not praise My holy name." So, also, we are told, "It is written, 'Our God is one God,'" but if you change the D into R (ד into ר—Daleth into Resh) the meaning becomes "Our God is a strange God." The division of the commandments by our Lord into "least" and "greater" appealed, at once, to a mode of speech familiar to His hearers, for the rabbis classified them as "light" or "weighty." To break one of the former was sinful, but did not expose the offender to accusation before the courts, while the Sanhedrim imposed the penalty of death on any transgression of the latter.[1]

The hearers of our Lord's warnings respecting anger against a brother, would understand them somewhat differently from our notions of their import. A "brother" was, to them, an Israelite by blood; a "neighbour," an Israelite by religion, that is, a proselyte. Only born or adopted Jews were either. "If any one's ox gore the ox of his neighbour," we are told, means only the ox of a Jew or

[1] Shevnoth, fol. 12, col. 2; Matt. v. 13, 19.

proselyte, for no heathen is a "neighbour." In the same spirit it is laid down, that an Israelite who kills an alien living among Jews, shall not be punished with death, since the death penalty is only required when one kills his neighbour,[1] and an alien, unless he be a proselyte, is not a neighbour.[2] How different from the spirit that breathes in the parable of the Good Samaritan! How different from the wide charity, caught from his Master by the once bigoted Pharisee, Paul, who tells us that, when one has become "a new man," that is, a Christian, "there cannot be (with him) either Greek or Jew, circumcision or uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, slave or freedman, but Christ is all, and in all."[3]

It is disputed among scholars what is meant by our Lord's reference, quoted as the opinion of "them of old times," that is, the rabbis of past generations, as to homicides who "shall be in danger of the judgment."[4] Perhaps they meant that an actual murderer must be put to death, while one who murders by the hand of another is only liable to death at the hand of God; but such casuistry is utterly opposed to the teaching of Christ.[5] Even an outburst of anger, without a just cause, He tells us, exposes one to the Divine judgment. The word "Raca" was an expression of the deepest contempt, very common among the Jews. "If the highest court, the Sanhedrim," says Christ, "were rightly minded, it would take notice of such an unworthy word, and not merely of actual murder." To use a word like "fool," of a brother Israelite—the idea connected with it in Scripture, being that of wickedness, and fixed perversity against God—was a very grave offence. "He who

[1] Exod. xxi. 14. [2] Lightfoot, *Hor. Heb.*, ii. 108. [3] Col. iii. 11.
[4] Matt. v. 21. [5] Lightfoot on the verse.

uses it," says Christ, "shall be in danger of hell fire." The word used for hell is "Gehenna," by which the Jews usually designated the place of the lost. It was taken from Ge-Hinnom, the valley of Hinnom, the ravine below the walls of Jerusalem, on the west and south sides; a place abhorred, from the worship of Moloch having formerly been celebrated in it, with the hideous accompaniment of the wailings of children, burnt alive to propitiate the idol. The precise spot of these horrors was at the south-east corner, and here, in later times, all the filth of the city and the offal of the Temple was heaped up, and burned: the fire, like that for similar purposes at the ghauts on the Ganges, being never allowed to go out, and thus supplying a vivid picture, according to the popular conception, of the horrors of the place of future punishment. "There are three doors," say the rabbis, "to the true Gehenna, which is under the earth. One is in the wilderness, for it is written, they, and all that appertained to them, went down, alive, to the pit.[1] A second is in the sea, for it is written, Out of the belly of hell cried I, and Thou heardest my voice.[2] The third is in Jerusalem, for it is written, Thus saith Jehovah, whose fire is in Zion, and His furnace in Jerusalem."[3]

Such quotations illustrate the rabbinical modes of interpretation, which could prove anything from almost any text; and the value of their theology, either on Gehenna or other subjects, was on a footing with the value of their Biblical exposition. It is curious to find that they were as earnest in denouncing passionate or contemptuous words as we see Christ to have been. "He who calls his neighbour a slave," says a rabbi, "is to be excommunicated.

[1] Hebrew, Sheol; Num. xvi. 33. [2] Jon. ii. 2. [3] Isa. xxxi. 9.

He who calls him a bastard, is to be punished with forty stripes; but if he call him a wicked man, he exposes himself to death at the hands of the Sanhedrim." In the Middle Ages, indeed, the rabbis declared that he who spoke of a Jew as without religion, would be thrust into Gehenna.[1] A striking parallel to the counsels of our Lord, in reference to leaving a gift before the altar, till the offerer had been reconciled to his brother,[2] is found in one of the treatises of the Talmud. "If any one," we are told, "set out to join in the Passover offering, and remembers on his way, that some leaven still remains in his house (contrary to the Law which requires that every trace of leaven be removed before the Passover)—let him turn back and perform his duty, on account of its great importance. But should he be too far from his house, so that if he turn back he will be too late for the feast, or if he cannot turn back on account of robbers or a swollen stream, or other difficulties, it is sufficient if he have had the desire to destroy the leaven."[3] It seems as if Jesus had this compounding with conscience in His mind, and gave it a moral bearing instead of the merely ritual, by substituting for the removing of leaven, the putting away any spiritual hindrance to the right presentation of an offering to God. In this case, indeed, He only expressed the sentiments of the more pious Israelites, in reference to at least one great religious observance. On the eve of the great day of Atonement, they were to seek reconciliation with any one they had offended, or with whom they were at variance, so that they might come before God, at peace with all mankind. An illustration of this, which throws light on ancient Jewish manners, is found in an old rabbinical story that runs thus:

[1] Schoettgen, i. 34. [2] Matt. v. 24. [3] Nork. 34; Schoettgen, 35.

Rabbi Joseph, the son of Chanana, having had open contention with another rabbi, Joseph said, on the eve of the great day of Atonement, "I will go and make up matters with him." He went off, therefore, and found the rabbi mixing a cup (for religious service). "Give me the cup," said he, "and I will mix it." So he gave it him. But as he was mixing it in his own fashion the rabbi said, "Your way of mixing the cup is the same as that of Rabbi Joseph, the son of Chanana, used to be." "I am he," was the reply, and they were, then and there, friends again.[1]

It is pleasant to think that warnings like those of our Lord, against indulging sinful thoughts, were not unknown among the better rabbis. "When a man indulges a sinful thought," says one of these ancient worthies, "it is the same as if he had already sinned against God. To look unworthily on a woman's finger is to commit all other sin in the heart."[2] It is significant of the morality of too many of the rabbis, that one who was in the habit of taking his seat where he overlooked the bathing place of the women, turned aside kind remonstrance, by the boast that he was of the seed of Joseph, and as such, superior to temptation.[3] Nor is it to be forgotten, that the rabbis held a man free to divorce his wife, if he saw another woman who pleased him more.[4] To this abuse of the Law, indeed, Christ alludes, after His denunciation of sinful thoughts. The popular school among the rabbis claimed the right to put away a wife on any pretext, perverting a verse in Deuteronomy which was held to permit divorce because of "uncleanness;" though the word there used implies some shameful fault.[5]

[1] Schoettgen, i. 319. [2] *Ibid.*, i. 37. [3] Lightfoot, ii. 118.
[4] *Ibid.*, ii. 119. [5] Deut. xxiii. 14; Schoettgen, ii. 38.

The multiplicity of oaths among the Jews, and the hollow equivocations in use as to their obligation, receive abundant illustrations from the rabbis. We read of oaths by the divine name Adonai, by the name Jehovah, by the name El Shaddai, by the word Sabaoth, by the attributes of the Eternal, and there were other oaths beyond numbering. At the same time, a mental reservation like that of the Jesuits was in vogue, as when Rabbi Akiba is said to have sworn an oath with his lips, but to have contradicted it in his heart, as he spoke; thus, as he thought, destroying the worth of it as binding on him, while it seemed valid to others.[1] Our Saviour's injunction, "Swear not at all," recalls a striking parallel in an ancient rabbi. "God, ever blessed," says he, "said to Israel, Think not that it is allowed you to swear by My name, even if you swear honestly, for it is not lawful to swear by My name, unless you fulfil the following conditions: 'Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God,'[2] that is, unless you already be men like Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph, who are spoken of as fearing My name. The sacred words then follow: 'And serve Him and cleave to Him.'[3] If these conditions are found in you, then, but not till then, is it permitted you to swear."[4] When our Lord enforces His command, by reminding His audience that they could not make one hair white or black, He only used an illustration already familiar to them. "In thy youth," says a rabbi, "who was it made the hair of your head black? For if you had washed it with nitre and borith, you could not have made one hair white, and yet, in thy old age, all thy hairs become like snow."[5]

[1] Matt. v. 33–37.
[2] Deut. vi. 13.
[3] These words are in the Talmud as part of the text.
[4] Schoettgen, i. 39.
[5] *Ibid.*, i. 41.

With the all-important reservation that, by a "neighbour," the rabbis meant a brother Jew only; regarding all other races as outside the mercy of God, and to be loathed, in the words of Esdras, "like the spittle on one's beard," the language of some Jewish doctors sounds delightfully generous. "When a man is in high prosperity," says one, "this verse should be remembered by him, Love thy neighbour as thyself, for I, the Lord, created him." "If thou lovest him," says God, "I am faithful and will give thee a rich reward; but if thou hatest him, I am Judge, and can revenge."

In Exodus it is written,[1] "If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee, lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him." This raised the question whether such kindness should be shewn, if the ass were the property of some one not a Jew, and the rabbis decided that it should not; since the text referred only to the ass of an Israelite.[2] Yet the ideal of fair dealing has never, perhaps, been better imagined than in a rabbinical legend, told in connection with the visit of Alexander the Great to the temple of Amon, in Africa. The local king, it is said, was approached, while in the company of Alexander, by two men between whom there was a dispute. "My lord," said the first, "I bought a basket of capers from this man, but when I was washing them, I found a treasure among them. And I have told the seller, Take thy treasure, for I bought capers, not a treasure, from you." The second replied: "I am afraid, just as you are, of acting unjustly. When I sold thee the capers, I sold all that was in the basket at the same time." Then the king asked the first if he had a son, and the second if he had a

[1] Exod. xxiii. 5. [2] Schoettgen, i. 43.

daughter, and when each answered in the affirmative, he ordered that the two young people should marry, and that the treasure should be given as their dower.[1]

Illustrations of the similarities and differences between the Sermon on the Mount, and the teaching current among the Jews in the days of our Lord, might be indefinitely multiplied, but those given are enough to shew how grand was the advance, in the tone and spirit of our Lord's instructions, beyond those of the rabbis. Yet a short note of some others may not be uninteresting. As heretofore, I shall follow the version of the Sermon given by St. Matthew. In strong rebuke of the habit of swearing oaths of all possible kinds, on all possible occasions,—as we see, for example, in a composite oath preserved in the Talmud, where a man swears by Jerusalem, the Temple, the altar, the lamb, the Temple chambers, the wood, the sacrifices, and the dishes used at them, to do "this thing for you" —Christ demands that we confine ourselves to the simplest affirmation or denial. They were to let their speech be Yea or Nay, as they intended to admit or contradict.[2] In keeping with this, a mediæval rabbi says, "Let business among the disciples of the wise," that is, the rabbis, "be in truth and faith, by saying, concerning Yes, Yes; concerning No, No."

Nothing was more ingrained in the Jewish mind than the notion that retaliation must be exacted for every offence or injury. "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," was the immemorial law of the Hebrews, though in Christ's day they had modified it, by making payment of damages for any injury inflicted, according to a settled tariff, equivalent to the literal exaction of a similar injury. The loss of

[1] Schoettgen, i. 46. [2] Matt. v. 37.

a hand or foot meant so much fine, just as with ourselves at this time. A box on the ear was assessed at the low rate of a shilling; a blow on the cheek at so much, a blow on both cheeks so much more, and so with other forms of assault. Christ cites this very fair and reasonable system, not, we may be sure, to condemn it as wrong, for without penalties for violence society would go to pieces, but to bring forward, for those able to act on it, a noble principle of Christian gentleness and love. "If any one take away thy coat," said the rabbis, "let him pay 400 *zuzees;*" but our Lord presses gentleness and self-denial on His followers, by telling them that, if any one took their outer garment, they are to let him have their inner one also; thus inculcating, in figurative words, the virtue of extreme peacefulness of spirit, but, of course, by no means implying that it be literally followed, as it would put us at the mercy of any rogue. The same principle is expressed in the counsel to go two miles, with him who had compelled us to go with him one; as if Christ had said, Have patience under even open, unjustifiable injuries. "Be meek and lowly in heart, like Me." For St. Peter, who was with Him from first to last, says of Him, "Who when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not."[1] In contrast of Christ's injunction to love our enemies, the rabbis had foisted on the Scriptures the very opposite, declaring that we should hate our enemies.[2] That they do not openly carry out this Satanic advice now, does not touch the fact that, in Christ's day, it was in full force. Even as late as the Middle Ages, it was laid down that a Jew was not to rescue a Gentile if he saw him drowning. "To love those who love us," said

[1] Isa. liii. 7; 1 Pet. ii. 23. [2] Matt. v. 43.

He, "was no virtue, for even the publicans did this; men, hated as utterly vile."

It is curious to notice that, in speaking, in the next paragraph, of alms, our Lord uses the word "righteousness," which was the one always employed by His countrymen for charity; since alms, in the teaching of the rabbis, were accepted by God as, in themselves, the highest form of righteousness. Thus we read, "For one farthing given to a poor man in alms, a man is made partaker of the beatific vision." The words, "I shall behold Thy face in righteousness," are rendered, "I shall behold thy face because of alms."[1] Yet all did not parade their liberality as the "hypocrites" did whom Christ denounces,[2] for the Talmud tells us of a rabbi, who, seeing a person giving money openly to a poor man, told the ostentatious giver that it was better not to have given at all, than to have given thus. The Jews, having the idea that alms were sure of a rich usury from God, at least in the next world, were very charitable. In every town, two collectors went out, daily, together, and gathered, from house to house, all they could, for poor Jews throughout the world, while in the synagogue, each Sabbath, contributions were put into an alms-chest for the poor of the town; a practice which St. Paul directed the Christians to imitate, on behalf of the poor in Jerusalem.[3] The use of a trumpet in connection with almsgiving is not mentioned in the Talmud, and is, hence, probably a mere figure of speech for hypocritical publicity; but to pray "standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets," was characteristic of the Judaism of the day. Standing with covered head, the face towards the Temple, and eyes cast downwards to the

[1] Ps. xvii. 15. [2] Matt. vi. 2. [3] 1 Cor. xvi. 2.

ground, was the ordinary posture in prayer. The peasant was enjoined to go to the synagogue, to recite his daily evening prayers, before he went home, on coming at night from the field ; a practice which it would be well to recommend among others besides Hebrews. Prayer in the streets was also usual. In times of public fasts, while the ark was still in existence, it is said by the rabbis to have been brought out from the Tabernacle or Temple, and sprinkled with ashes ; the High Priest also, and his deputy, having their heads similarly strewn, and the whole people having ashes, in the same way, scattered on them. They then stood, while a chosen elder recited prayers, of which, in later times, there were twenty-four. Christ was far from condemning the use of the synagogue as a place of prayer, for He, Himself, used it as such, habitually. He simply condemned the practice of too many, in that age of religious form, who sought notice by praying ostentatiously ; often using private prayers, different from those used by the congregation, to draw all eyes upon them as specially devout. As the Mohammedans turn their faces, when they pray, to Mecca, the Jews, as we read in Daniel [1] and elsewhere,[2] turned towards the Temple in their devotions; and just as the former kneel down at this day, wherever they may be, when the hour of prayer arrives, the Hebrews stood still, and went through their prayers, at any spot in which the sacred moment might find them ; too many scheming to be caught thus, while on the streets, so as to have an excuse for praying in public ; which, not seldom, we are told even by the rabbis, was done with a special shew of devotion ; so many prayers being said at one spot,

[1] Dan. vi. 10.
[2] 1 Kings viii. 44 ; Ps. v. 7 ; xxviii. 2 ; cxxxviii. 2.

and then so many more, four cubits farther on. Hence, moreover, one might see a person stop his ass suddenly, and begin his devotions, or go through them in a tree he might be pruning, or anywhere else. Sincerity was never condemned by Christ, but make-believe was hateful to Him. Form had, in fact, hardened into formality. Too great demands were made of human nature, and hypocrisy followed as a natural result. Prayer was advised, for example, on so many occasions, that, to have carried out the counsel literally, would have kept one praying all the time. Thus, men were told they should pray where any miracle had been wrought, where idolatry had been rooted out, where an idol stood, when they saw a negro, a dwarf, a crooked or lame person, or a fine tree, or a beautiful face, and on countless other occasions. It is touching to find that even in our day, the Jew of every country still thinks his prayers would want their holiest sanction, if he did not turn his face, when he offered them, towards Jerusalem. To help him in doing so, the door of every synagogue is placed so that the face, as one enters, shall be towards the much-honoured spot where the Temple once stood; as, in mosques, a niche points out the direction of Mecca. It has been the same in many religions, from the earliest times. The apostate elders, for example, seen by Ezekiel, stood with their faces to the east and their backs to the Temple, to worship the rising sun,[1] and it was no doubt to check the tendency, so universal in Syria, to adopt sun-worship, that the Temple faced the east, thus requiring the worshipper to look westward when he prayed to the Holy of Holies. Like the sun-worshippers, the Greeks and Romans, also, prayed toward the east; their temples and the

[1] Ezek. viii. 16.

statues of the gods being so oriented, that this position was mechanically imposed on the suppliant.[1]

As to repetitions of the same requests in prayer, a saying of a rabbi, "Every one that multiplied prayer is heard," explains Christ's words.[2] I have spoken of our Lord's Prayer in my "Life of Christ," and therefore refer to it for details. It was only, however, in keeping with the practice of the rabbis, that He gave His disciples such a summary. As now, the Jew in Christ's day, had eighteen prayers to recite daily, but, since it might not always be possible to repeat them all, short epitomes were provided, condensing their essence into easy brevity. "If a man," says Rabbi Akiba, "cannot pray the eighteen, let him pray the summary of them." To supply His disciples with such a short abstract, comprising the substance of all prayer, was the object of Christ, in teaching them the perfect form which bears His name. The Baptist, as we may remember, in the same way, "taught his disciples to pray."[3]

Among other hypocrisies of the time, our Lord next condemned those connected with fasting.[4] To heighten the wretchedness of their appearance, some, He tells us, were wont to blacken their faces with ashes; one rabbi, indeed, having the reputation of having done so all through his life. In fasting, Jews neither anointed themselves nor washed, though this was only legally required for the one yearly fast of the great day of Atonement, while rigid Pharisees fasted twice a week, as a matter of extra holiness.[6] To abstain from such elementary personal proprieties on so many days; especially to leave themselves unwashed, roused the contemptuous indignation of one so

[1] Geikie's *Holy Land and Bible*, i. 204.
[2] Matt. vi. 5–7.
[3] Luke xi. 1.
[4] Matt. vi. 16–18.
[6] Luke xviii. 12.

absolutely sincere as Jesus. It is curious to find, in connection with the recommendation of St. James to "anoint the sick in the name of the Lord," praying over him, "and the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick,"[1] that the Jews used anointing, accompanied with the muttering of spells, for the same purpose. The apostle, while sanctioning the anointing, in vogue as a remedy for ailments, virtually tells them that it would be much better to ask a blessing on the doing so, through the earnest prayer of pious elders of the Church, than to trust to superstitious charms and magic spells.

The caution about not laying up treasures,[2] points to the Eastern habit of keeping all one's valuables in his own house, hidden in some secret spot, as was the way with our ancestors, when life and property were not so secure as they are now. The fine robes so greatly valued by Orientals were apt to be fretted by the moth, and other insects, and the costly arms and steel-work, to be eaten by rust, while the walls, often of sun-dried brick, were constantly being dug through by thieves, as is now too often the case in India. Job's expression, "houses of clay," and the references in Proverbs to the leaking of the roofs, by rain soaking through them, applied with equal force to the usual houses of Palestine in Christ's day, and to those in our own. Ezekiel, also, we may remember, dug a hole through the soft wall of his house, and carried out through it the bundle intended for a journey.

An evil or good eye[3] was an expression among the Jews for a covetous or generous disposition, and, hence, covetousness is called "the lust of the eyes."[4]

The allusion to "the grass of the field, which to-day is,

[1] James v. 14. [2] Matt. vi. 19. [3] Matt. vi. 22. [4] 1 John ii. 16.

and to-morrow is cast into the oven,"[1] would come home at once to all Christ's hearers. Fuel is very scarce in many parts of Palestine; and hence we everywhere see, in the houses of the peasantry, a clay oven, about a yard deep, and tapering from three feet across at the bottom, to a foot less at the top, sunk in the mud floor so that only the opening, a little below its rounded head, rises in sight. Into this are thrown quantities of the weeds, thorns, and rough growth so plentiful everywhere, and also of the beautiful wild flowers, which, in spring, make the landscape a blaze of colour. All these are included in the common name of "grass," and as the common food of the oven, illustrate vividly the words of our Lord. The mild reproof, "O ye of little faith," addressed by our Lord to the disciples,[2] in connection with this allusion to the flower and grass, was a frequent expression of the rabbis. "Whosoever has but a small morsel in his wallet, and says, What have I to eat to-morrow? is one of little faith," says one of these sages.

The rule, "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again," on the other hand, shews its full meaning from the ways still in use, to measure grain in the East, for a professional measurer can and does put very much more into his measure, if he wish to favour a buyer, than if he be in the pay of the seller. By skilful shaking, pressing down, and heaping up, the difference is made very great. To "give into the bosom" is, as we have seen, to pour into the upper part of the long single garment, now of cotton, which being tied round the waist by a leather strap or girdle, makes a bag or pocket into which is put whatever it can hold, though, as next the skin, it is not a nice place for grain, and yet, as in the text, is often used

[1] Matt. vi. 30. [2] Matt. vi. 30.

for it, and any other kind of food. I have myself been offered figs from this strange larder, which is so universally that of the poor man, that, as we see, "bosom" stands in the Gospels for it. A peasant would carry his wheat or barley home in it, without hesitation, and knows so well how varying the contents of the same seed measure are, and have always been, that he could, to-day, realize vividly Christ's words, which were a common proverb of those times: "With the measure a man measures, others measure to him." That our Lord uses familiar proverbs so often, is a hint to preachers they should always keep in mind; for such simplicity and naturalness were the very soul of His addresses. His words about "pulling the mote out of the eye,"[1] and the blind leading the blind, in St. Luke's version of the Sermon,[2] were both, in the same way, proverbs of His day. "It is written, that in the days when men judged their judges, if a judge said to another, Cast the mote out of thine eye; he would be answered, Cast you out the beam from your own eye." So says the Talmud.

The caution, not to "give that which is holy unto the dogs"—"holy" meaning "clean" in the Jewish sense—would be very forcible to Orientals, but needs acquaintance with the East to realize in its full significance. Dogs which have no masters abound in all Eastern cities. Sleeping by day,[3] they are fiercely astir with sunset, and scour the dusty lanes which pass for streets, howling, snarling, and fighting over the offal and foulness thrown out from the houses; for in Eastern towns everything is thrown into the public road, to be eaten by the dogs; the only scavengers of these filthy communities. When at Thebes, and also

[1] Matt. vii. 3. [2] Luke vi. 39. [3] Isa. lvi. 10.

when at Gaza, these useful but hateful brutes were really alarming, by the ferocity with which they flew out at me, and it was only by grace of a stout stick I could protect myself. "Dogs have compassed me about," says a psalmist: "deliver my darling from the power of the dog." "At evening," says another psalmist, "let them return, let them make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city."[1] The noise of the dogs, as I groped my way into Gaza, was dreadful, but Moses tells his countrymen their departure from Egypt will be so peaceful, "that not a dog will move his tongue against man or beast;"[2] and Judith calmed the fears of Holofernes by telling him, she would guide him so carefully that the dogs would not know of his passing."[3]

His audience would vividly realize Christ's comparison of "false prophets," that is, teachers, to "ravening wolves," for wolves were only too numerous in ancient Palestine, as may be judged from the two following extracts from the rabbis. "The elders proclaimed a fast in their cities, on one occasion, because the wolves had devoured two little children beyond Jordan." "More than three hundred sheep were torn by wolves."

In the question,[4] "Do men gather figs of thistles?" the word used points out the plant intended. It is what was then called the "tribolos," from being like the iron caltrop, or ball with four iron points, which, thrown on the ground in battle, had always a sharp point sticking up, to lame cavalry. The star thistle, which seems to be the plant intended, abounds in Palestine, sometimes in masses through which no one can force a way. But, indeed, the

[1] Ps. xxii. 16–20; lix. 14, 15.
[2] Exod. xi. 7.
[3] Judith xi. 19.
[4] Matt. vii. 16.

Holy Land is singular, as compared with the West, in the number of spiny growths it boasts—brambles, thorns, thistles, and "pricks" of all kinds. There are, in fact, twenty-three words for them in the Bible.

The great text,[1] "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them," had already been virtually made current in Christ's day, by a saying of the great Rabbi Hillel. "A certain heathen," we read, "came to Shammai and said, Make me a proselyte, that I may learn the whole Law while standing on one foot; but Shammai struck him with his staff, for asking so ridiculous a thing. He then went to Hillel, with the same proposal, and Hillel made him a proselyte, answering his demand by saying, Do nothing to thy neighbour you would not like done to thyself, for this is the whole Law." Hillel flourished in the generation before Christ. The figure of building on the sand, or on the rock, as an emblem of security and the reverse, is peculiarly suitable to Palestine, which is seamed by the beds of winter torrents, dry in summer, but turned into the channels of roaring floods during winter storms. Thus, in the hot months, when they would be invaluable, their beds are the only road, in many cases, from one place to another; dry stony defiles, along which one's beast stumbles and cautiously picks its steps, amidst a chaos of stones and boulders of all sizes. The bare limestone hills, for the hills, especially in the south of the Holy Land, are as bare as round lumps of coral, shoot off, as if from the roof of a house, the deluges of rain that pour down in winter, and these, joining similar floods from other hills, gather into a foaming river, as they rush from higher to lower wadys, filling the deep bed of that by which they

[1] Matt. vii. 12.

gain the lowlands, with a body of water, before which everything opposing them is swept away in a moment. It is much the same as in the Sinai peninsula, where, in less than two hours, a dry desert wady, upwards of 300 yards broad, was turned into a foaming torrent, from eight to ten feet deep. Yet, next morning a quiet stream, only a few yards broad, was all that remained of it, and that only a few inches deep. The tents of Arabs are not unfrequently swept away by such sudden deluges, against which not even their local knowledge is sufficient protection at all times. To build a house in such a situation would be, of course, what no sane person would think of doing.[1] But, indeed, it is not always safe to build even on the top of the wady, at least too near the edge, for the flood at times not only fills the rough channel but rises above it, sweeping away any obstacle it may encounter. Job used this characteristic of the country long before Christ's day, of the three friends, who having turned against him, were, he said, "dealing deceitfully as the torrents that pass away; which are black by reason of the" (melted) "ice, and wherein the snow hideth itself: what time they wax warm" (or shrink), "they vanish: when it is hot they are consumed out of their place." His visitors had seemed overflowing with sympathy, as the wadys were brimmed in spring with tumultuous waters, from the melted snows of the mighty Lebanon, but, like them, were presently changed to a strange opposite; as when the floods had swept past, and only the stony emptiness of the wady remained.[2] It is curious to see, how, at Nazareth, Christ's own village, the houses are set in recesses cut in the yellow limestone, rather than trust them even on the slope of the hill.

[1] Matt. vii. 24-27. [2] Job vi. 15-17.

The multitude were astonished, we are told, at the difference between Christ's teaching and that of the scribes; and well they might be, for the rabbis never ventured to say anything without giving the authority of some earlier rabbi, as our judges always base their opinions and decisions on precedents, shrinking from any suspicion of thinking for themselves, as if it were indescribable audacity. No address of a rabbi had any value without the superstitious addition, "Thus say the wise," or something of that kind. It is told of Hillel, the great rabbi, that, on one occasion, he discoursed on a certain matter all day long, but "they received not his doctrine" till he added, before closing, "So I heard from Shemaia and Abtalion." Christ, on the other hand, never alluded to the rabbis, or their deliverances in the past, but spoke for Himself, on His own authority, always using the first person, "I say," and never seeking any confirmation of His doctrine from any one whatever. What could be more startling than to hear this Galilean villager say, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time—but I say unto you"! Such independence was revolutionary in the eyes of the rabbis, and amazing in those of the multitude.

NOTE.—The authorities for this chapter are mainly Eisenmenger, Schoettgen, Buxtorff, and Lightfoot's *Horæ Hebraicæ*.

CHAPTER XX.

CHRIST'S ALLUSIONS TO NATURE.

THAT our Lord wrought cures beyond human skill, and that He was gaining a favourable hold on the popular mind, as a teacher or prophet sent from God, was evident to the narrow inquisitors of Judaism; the priests and the rabbis. How could it be stopped? Was it not possible to turn His popularity, by some means, into discredit and aversion? The scribes and Pharisees, poring over the matter, at last struck out an ideal scheme which promised them success; these miracles must be clever devices of Beelzebub, "the prince of the devils," to attract people to such an enemy of the Church and teacher of heresy. Taking for granted that anything outside their creed or practice was an attack on religion, they set down Christ as a dangerous innovator. Since He differed from them, the self-constituted sole possessors of the truth, He must be an enemy of God, and could only, therefore, be inspired by Beelzebub, for miraculous powers must come either from above, or from Satan. As the assayers of orthodoxy, they, hence, with lofty airs of sanctimoniousness, branded the Nazarene as a heretic.[1]

The Being raised by the Jews of the time to the dark presidency of the spirits of evil, was an old god, who had his chief temple at Ekron, on the sea-coast plain, and had

[1] Matt. xii. 22–37; Mark iii. 22–30; Luke xi. 14, 15, 17–23.

been a great personage in the pantheon of the Philistines, when they were a nation, in times long before Christ. Flies, and countless other insect plagues, afflicted these parts, from time to time, as they do all hot countries, and Beelzebub, "the lord of flies," was hence exalted as a deity to whom the people could appeal, to protect them from such calamities. Other Eastern nations had gods to whom a similar dignity was ascribed, and even among the Jews, from early times, the Philistine fly-god had received no little superstitious reverence, for the land has always been troubled, as it is now, in summer, with creeping and flying creatures of many kinds. Instances have been known at Nazareth, itself, Christ's own village, where such swarms of flies appeared as darkened the air, and Arab encampments are sometimes broken up by flights of winged pests, so countless, that neither smoke nor fire can keep them off. In the sunken bed of the Jordan, a kind of blood-sucking fly often forces the shepherds to drive their flocks to higher ground, where they are not thus tormented. At Bethlehem my face was terribly bitten by mosquitoes, and the notice in Judith, that she drew aside a mosquito-net that was round the bed of Holofernes, to get at his throat, shews that antiquity was worried in these parts, by these plagues, as we moderns are now.[1] "Zebub," the word for flies in the name "Beelzebub," is twice used in the Bible; once, where we are told how "dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to stink," and in Isaiah, when he speaks of God as "hissing" for the fly that is "in the uttermost part of the rivers (or canals) of Egypt." The prophet alludes, by this figure, to the sound by which men, then and now, in these lands, attract

[1] Judith xiii. 9.

a swarm of bees to a hive. Both on the Nile and in Palestine, the common fly is a grievous plague in the hot season, causing ophthalmia by the foulness of its feet and proboscis; breaking the skin and making festering sores; and lighting in such myriads on every article of food that is for a moment uncovered, as to hide it completely, as they do in some parts of Canada and the United States.

As early as the reign of Ahaziah, the temple of Beelzebub at Ekron was famous as the seat of an oracle consulted to reveal the future. It was to it that the sick Jewish king sent, to know whether he should recover from a fall to the ground, through the lattice of his upper chamber. The reputation which such an inquiry from a king of Judah implied, naturally went on increasing, till, before Christ's day, Beelzebub had risen to so unquestioned a supremacy among local idols, that the Jews, to whom all idols were devils, looked on him as the prince of these evil beings, who were thought to fill the air and the whole earth, and wreak their malignity on man and beast by inflicting all the evils of any kind from which either, at any time, suffered. In Christ's day, however, the name had been degraded from Beelzebub to Beelzebul, which means not the fly-god, but the filth-god.

The mention of the "fly-god" brings us into the natural environments of Christ, in one disagreeable manifestation. There were round Him, however, other forms of animal life, of many kinds. On the slope beside the one fountain of Nazareth, He would see laden or unladen camels resting, from time to time, as they passed on to the towns by the Lake of Galilee, or down to the plain of Esdraelon. Unsightly, uncurried beasts, we may be sure they would be, for when did an Oriental take any trouble with a domestic

animal? I never saw a camel that was not more or less the worse for neglect, and too many are at once dirty and mangey. Stables are unknown to them. Kneeling, when their day's journey is over, they are loosened from their load, and, when fed with some teben—the broken straw of the threshing-floor—and, perhaps, a little barley, are left to sleep in the open air. When crossing the plain below the hills, Christ, as I have said, would see strings of these useful creatures, stalking along one behind another, each tied to the one before it; the man in charge of them riding, in advance, on his ass; rarely on a horse; his turban covering his smoothly shaved head, and a long cotton sack with sleeves, his only dress if it were summer, though he would have over it, in winter, a great shapeless loose woollen abba, or great coat, large enough to fit a man of any size, wrapped across, in front, and kept together by a sash; his legs and arms most probably bare and exposed, and his feet, at best, stuck into shapeless sandals. At the slow pace of about two miles and a half an hour, the ordinary rate of Eastern travel, the picturesque train would wend on, to or from the coast towns, with huge black skin bottles of oil, or bags of grain, or Phœnician goods for Damascus. The long necks of the camels would ever and anon be stretched down, to crop some thistle, or briar, or thorn, which they seem to like better than any green fodder. The hair of the camel, especially the coarse woolly tufts on the hump and back, are pulled off, or shorn away, yearly, and spun into a thick cloth by the Arab women, for tent coverings, but, also, for rough coats, one of which we find the Baptist wearing, as befitted his austerity. Two proverbs connected with the camel are used by our Lord: the first, "It is easier for a camel to go through the

eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."[1] This is evidently a hyperbole, to express, as St. Mark says, "how hard it is for them that trust in riches,"[2] to maintain such a spirit as is demanded for citizenship in that "kingdom." Perhaps the huge needles used to sew the bags which the camel bears, may have given rise to the saying, for they are threaded with rope-like cords. There is no small entrance at the side of town gates, so that to speak of such a thing as known by the name of the "needle's eye," is a mistake. The second proverb is used by Christ, of the rabbis of His day: "Ye blind guides, who strain out a gnat, and swallow a camel;"[3] comparing them to one who takes out a small fly from what he is drinking, while he swallows something much larger.

"The fatted calf" was a rare thing two thousand years ago, as it still is, in the hilly districts amidst which most of Christ's life was spent. Cattle do not thrive where the food is so scarce as on the uplands of Palestine, and hence are mainly found in the plains. But every one was familiar with them, more or less; though the fatted calf they might occasionally see, would be a very different creature from its English representative, for the cattle of Palestine are extremely poor, small, and thin. The countless caves in the soft limestone tableland offer ready shelter, alike on the foothills bordering the sea-plains, and in the high central region, for goats, cattle, or sheep; and Christ must often, like wayfarers of to-day, have seen these creatures penned in a natural vault in the rocks, and their owners living close by, in another; the roof of their rude home blackened by the smoke of the winter fire. In the earliest morning, He would see the people driving their camels,

[1] Matt. xix. 24. [2] Mark x. 24. [3] Matt. xxiii. 24.

plough-oxen, sheep, or goats, afield, to pick up what food was to be found on the so-called pastures of the wilderness, that is, of the open country, or on the sides of the hills; the wonder to an Englishman being what they could find on surfaces so bare. The cattle in Palestine are now owned, not by the peasants, who are miserably poor, but by the tent Arabs, who wander, gipsy fashion, where they please, over the once carefully tilled lowlands. These migrants, however, own large herds; indeed I saw hundreds on the low hills, on the way to Gaza; all small and poor, according to our standard. An ox and an ass, or a camel, pulling the light plough, would be a familiar sight to our Lord, but, then as now, two oxen would be most common. I have seen, I should think, twenty so-called ploughs, at work in one landscape on the plains, scratching the soil of isolated patches; for a field in our sense is not to be seen, and the absence of hedges or fences lessens the effect even of what cultivation there is. He must have thought, like the son of Sirach, as He saw the poor peasants, in cotton tunics and turban, with one hand on the plough, and the other carrying their long sharp-pointed goad, stalking along the furrows a few inches deep, from sunrise to sunset, "How can he get wisdom that holdeth the plough and that glorieth in the goad, that driveth oxen, and is occupied in their labours, and whose talk is of bullocks: he giveth his mind to make furrows, and is diligent to give his kine fodder."[1] How often, as He saw the cattle, home again from their work in the field, at sunset, go directly to their own feeding-place, generally in the yard of their master's house, passing quietly through the groups of villagers, squatted, Eastern fashion, on the

[1] Ecclus. xxxviii. 25, 26.

ground, in the open air, and hooking open the rough door of their rude quarters with their horns, without any help, must He have remembered the words of Isaiah, "The ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, My people doth not consider."[1] Some of them, He would notice, had charms hung round their necks; little bags containing magic spells, to protect them, as was supposed, from harm of any kind; for charms are to be seen everywhere, even now, and the population in Christ's day could not have been very different from their modern successors. Jacob's female household wore earrings, and the men would wear them as well, graved with magic devices, to guard the wearer from every form of calamity. Even to-day, the "little moons" condemned by Isaiah, are a favourite ornament of Palestine women; the moon being still regarded as bringing good fortune, and its disk or crescent a guard against the black arts. Men, women, children, houses, herds, flocks, and even fruit trees, are still protected by mystic characters, engraved on bits of metal, or written on paper sewed into little bags, or scratched on the bark of the orchard trees. The killing the "fatted calf" was a striking proof of the joy of the Prodigal's father, at getting his son back again, for an Oriental rarely goes so far, in his highest exuberance of generosity. He will kill a chicken for a guest, or a male kid, for the female kids are never killed; but a calf, and especially the one that had been fatted, is reserved for a very greatly honoured guest. No touch could have painted to Christ's audience, more vividly, the yearning love of the father for his penitent child, than that he should have called

[1] Isa. i. 3.

aloud, to kill even the fatted calf, to welcome him home.

How often must our Lord have seen men loosing their ox or ass, from its stall in the house-yard, or in the back half of the one house-chamber, and that even on the Sabbath, to lead it away to watering in the village pool of rain water banked within clay mounds; the one source, too often, of all the water, for every purpose of the little community. As I have said, I have noticed cattle standing drinking in such a pond, children bathing in it, and housewives taking water from it for domestic use, all at the same time; and our Lord must have constantly seen a spectacle so contrary to all our Western notions of safety or cleanliness.[1]

Of the dogs which abounded in every town or village Christ entered, I have already spoken. They have no masters, and are, therefore, never attached to any one as with us, but they constantly prowl into the always open doors of the houses, and snap up the "crumbs that fall from their master's table."[2] The allusion is to the fragments of all kinds that necessarily fell, where each sitter round a low, stool-like table, ate with his fingers, and used bits of the thin bread to wipe them. But does the mention of masters imply that in Christ's day there were dogs belonging to a family or individual? If so, there are none such now. In the Bible there are nearly forty notices of the dog, but they almost always express dislike and contempt. Hence, a Gentile was called a dog by a Jew, as Christians are now called by Mohammedans. Still, in the open hill country, Christ must often have watched the care with which the "dogs of the flocks" guarded the sheep intrusted

[1] Luke xiii. 15. [2] Matt. xv. 27.

to their care. Through the day they keep ward over the sheepskins and old rugs, and the few pots and pans of their masters, when they are far away with their charge; but at night they watch round the outside of the sheepfold, which is generally a ring of stones, built, without mortar, into a wall, but sometimes only a circle of thorny bushes piled up. Had the dogs of Christ's day been, at least as a rule, domesticated, we may be sure a creature so faithful would have been mentioned more frequently in the Gospels, for they notice it only three times; in the proverb, not to cast that which is holy, or "clean," to it; in the other proverb, that dogs eat the crumbs of the family meal; and in the parable of Dives and Lazarus, where it is unpleasantly introduced as licking the beggar's sores.[1]

In His wanderings among the Nazareth hills when a youth, or in His wider circuits through the land, in later years, and especially when, in the time of His retirement after being baptized, "He was with the wild beasts,"[2] Christ would often see the fox steal away to its hole in the rocks, for foxes much like our own are common in Palestine, prowling singly for their food; not, like the jackal, in packs. In Britain, it is strictly carnivorous, but in the Holy Land, its necessities, perhaps, have made it a much more promiscuous feeder; as the grapes in too many vineyards bear sad witness, each year.[3] Christ knew how it loves lonely places, seeking desolate spots and old ruins. He remembered how the prophets, thinking of this, could imagine no more vivid picture of utter ruin and solitude, than that the foxes would run to and fro, where a city or town had stood; as when Jeremiah says of the mountain of Zion, "It is desolate, the foxes walk upon it."[4] He

[1] Luke xvi. 21. [2] Mark i. 13. [3] Cant. ii. 15. [4] Lam. v. 18.

knew how it stepped so softly, that, as Tobiah the Ammonite had long before said, it could creep up loose heaps of stone without disturbing any part of them.[1] He knew its habit of burrowing a home for itself and its mate, in the broken wall, or in the rocks, for He pathetically told those round Him, that "the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, but the Son of man had not where to lay His head."[2] The cunning they shew was even then proverbial, for He rebuked the craft and duplicity of Herod Antipas, by speaking of him as a fox.[3] Watching nature, the revelation of the Great Father, as the Gospels shew Christ did, He no doubt knew well, how the young foxes were born in the spring, four to nine in the litter, poor blind little things, but that they grew so fast, that in a month after their birth, they could do great mischief in the blossoming vineyards, scratching down to the roots of the vines, and, in mere wantonness, tearing off the clusters of buds, attracted by their fragrance; so that the Shulamite, in Canticles, cries out in trouble, "Catch us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines."

Wherever our Lord wandered, whether by the Lake of Galilee, or over the bare hills of Judæa, or through the green glens of the north, He would meet, day by day, larger or smaller flocks of goats, following their ragged, turbaned goat-herd; often accompanied by a separate flock of sheep, under the same guardian; each keeping to itself, though both browsing on the same tract. Goats and sheep do not mingle, and the sight of them thus distinct may readily have suggested to our Lord the vivid picture of the division of the righteous and the wicked at the judgment, as black goats on the left hand, and white sheep on the

[1] Neh. iv. 3. [2] Matt. viii. 20. [3] Luke xiii. 32.

right. I have often watched the two flocks as they moved over the pasture: the sheep sedately following the shepherd, as he guided them to the best spots, along the easiest paths; the goats, apart, keeping near, but spreading out in a looser advance; full of life, and delighting to mount every rock, or to wander down the side of the steepest crag, where there seemed no possible footing; out of sight of their leader, till they had climbed to the top again. Even in the fold they keep apart; the he-goats going out, each morning, followed by the females, which are ten to one more numerous. A kid, always a male, is the usual dish at any ordinary entertainment; lambs being generally kept till they grow to their full size, and calves being too precious to kill except on very special occasions, as was felt by the elder brother of the prodigal son, when he murmured to his father, "Thou never gavest me a *kid*, that I might make merry with my friends; but as soon as this thy son was come, . . . thou hast killed for him the *fatted calf*."[1] Day by day our Lord would get goats' milk to drink, for it is still the choice beverage of Palestine, as it was long before the writer of the Proverbs promised the diligent sheep-master, that he would have "goats' milk enough for his food, for the food of his household, and for the maintenance of his maidens."[2] In the hills, that is, in the Jews' country, there is no other milk used, and its goats are all the wealth of which many villages can boast. The lambs gave the villager his clothing, but the goats yielded so much profit that they are called, in Proverbs, "the price of a field."[3] In some places Christ would see them gathered by hundreds, in the evenings, for all the she-goats

[1] Gen. xxvii. 9; Judg. vi. 19; xiii. 15; Luke xv. 29, 30.
[2] Prov. xxvii. 27. [3] Prov. xxvii. 26.

are driven in, flock after flock each night, for milking, and as often as He came to a village about sunset, He would have to thread His way through the picturesque creatures, as those belonging to each household made for their own quarters, which they know perfectly. They are milked each morning, as well as in the evening, and hence Christ was familiar with the sight of all the open spaces filled with them, besides those at every house door; all being milked by women, boys, and girls; the sober mothers eagerly waiting their turn, or lying down, to enjoy themselves in chewing the cud, as soon as it was over. All this goes on very quietly, as there are no kids or he-goats in the throng, so that the tempest of bleating, usual where large herds are together, is conspicuous by its absence.

In very many cabins, Christ would sleep on the floor, in the front part of the one chamber, while the goat or goats, if the weather were cold, would be lying in the slightly lower half behind, with the ass, if there were one; the fowls, meanwhile, roosting on a rough pole above them, but all under the same small roof. It is curious to see the flock going home at night, so solemn and thoughtful in their looks, and so sensible, for they do not need any one to drive them; knowing, of themselves, how dangerous it would be for them to remain away from protection, through the darkness. But the goat was not lost to our Lord's notice when no longer alive, for, as He knew, the "bottles" in which the wine, water, milk, and oil of the country, were kept, or carried from place to place, were only the rudely tanned skins of kids and goats; as, indeed, every one could see, for they have the shape of the creatures, less head and legs. Even the hair was on new ones, for it helps to protect them, so that all knew the look of old "bottles,"

when He spoke of them; the smoothness telling of the age, and hinting of the weakness of the now thin leather.[1] He knew, too, that many of the dresses of the women around Him were of goat-hair cloth, woven by their own sex, or even by themselves, and some of the tent covers, seen in the open below Nazareth, and elsewhere, were, as every one was aware, from the same source. And only too often, His tender soul would be saddened by the sight of some poor creature who could afford no better coat than a rough sheep or goat skin, like the "destitute, afflicted, tormented" worthies, of whom we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews.[2] Thus the goat played a large part in the life around the Master. Even at the Temple, indeed, He would be continually reminded of it, for great numbers were being constantly offered on the altar, as sacrifices, and, at the Passover, He would find a kid often substituted, by poor people, for a lamb.[3]

It is a curious incidental proof of the rareness of horses in Palestine, in our Lord's day, as at present, that they are not mentioned at all in the Gospels. One seldom meets them except with passing travellers, or in droves, on the way from the market at Damascus to that of Egypt. Palestine, from the remotest ages, has used the ass for all purposes for which horses are used in more level countries, though the camel is employed as well as the ass, for carrying loads; everything being borne on some beast, as there are no roads for wheeled vehicles. Even the mule is not named in the Gospels, so that it, also, like the horse, must have been at least comparatively scarce.

If the seemingly bare hills amidst which Christ spent His life, offered too little pasture for the larger cattle, the

[1] Matt. ix. 17. [2] Heb. xi. 37. [3] Gen. xv. 9; Exod. xii. 5; Num. xv. 27.

dry chalk soil supplied aromatic plants and stunted shrubs, the favourite food of goats, and some grass for sheep. Hence, both formed a great feature in the life of Christ's day, as they do of that of Palestine now, and as they have in all ages. Sheep, indeed, are mentioned about five hundred times in the Bible, and twenty-seven times in the Gospels. Everywhere in the Holy Land, one comes on the shepherd ; sometimes, and, indeed, generally with a small flock, but, occasionally, with a large one. The allusions to a calling so universally familiar are, hence, very frequent in the story of our Lord. The false teacher is compared by Him to a wolf in sheep's clothing.[1] He sends the apostles to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel ;" a figure borrowed from sights of stray, forlorn creatures, which He must often have met, far from the fold and the care of the shepherd, and exposed to the danger of wolves and robbers, as well as the rigour of the sky by night. No emblem could be more apt for the masses of the peasantry of His day, whom the rabbis and self-righteous religionists round abandoned to contemptuous neglect, as not acquainted with the weary detail of rabbinical tradition, and forced, by their very poverty, to live without strict observance of its numberless requirements. They were, in fact, the counterparts of the multitudes, who, in our own country, have been allowed by Christians to grow virtual heathen, and for whose worldly necessities only charity has even attempted to care ; the state leaving them, as a hopeless difficulty, to perish, or live, as they best can.

The whole of Palestine is honeycombed with cisterns, hewn out in the underground rock, which is near the surface everywhere ; a great many being found all round

[1] Matt. vii. 15.

Nazareth. It is very easy for a stray sheep to slip into one of these, and there is no escape for it, unless some one "lay hold on it and lift it out."[1] At Gerar, I saw many "pits" as wide as wells, into which, but for a protecting wall round their mouths, any number of sheep might have fallen. Christ had often, we may fancy, Himself, even on the superstitiously observed Sabbath, lifted out some poor sheep or lamb, whose pitiful bleats He had heard in passing; for many of the pits are filled up to a moderate distance from the top. To defend Himself from accusations of having broken the Sabbath, by reminding His sanctimonious assailants that there was not a man among them, the owner of even one sheep, who would scruple to pull it out of a pit on the Sabbath-day, if it had fallen into one, was natural; for how could they have the hardihood to pretend that He had done wrong in saving a man—one of the many sheep of the Heavenly Father—on the Sabbath; when they would break it, according to their own notions, to save a sheep; a man being of so infinitely more value than any number of sheep! Wandering over the sun-scorched uplands, where the dry chalk offered little for the flocks led to them for pasture, He would often see them scattered far and wide, in search of food; the careless shepherd having left them to themselves, while he lay at ease in some shady hillside cave, or in the shadow of some projecting rock. What figure more vivid and effective could he have used for the eager multitudes who followed Him, just as a flock of weary, foot-sore sheep, without shepherds, and therefore without protection, or guidance to water or pasture, would gather behind and follow any one who called them to come after him and find both?

[1] Matt. xii. 11.

And was it wonderful that the multitude flocked to Him, who, while the leaders of the religious world denounced them as accursed, and deliberately left them to perish, stretched out His hands in loving invitation to them, and in a voice of such tenderness and sweet pitying love as seemed of heaven rather than of earth, urged them, as poor, weary, labouring, and heavy laden ones, which they felt only too deeply they were, to come to Him, and He would give them rest ?[1]

Wolves, as we have seen, were numerous in the land, and doubtless Christ had many a time heard shepherds bewailing their depredations, or seen the torn carcasses of sheep and lambs, from which the fierce beasts had been driven away. It was natural, therefore, that He should warn the apostles, beforehand, of their gloomy prospect in the world, when they went out to preach the new faith, by comparing them to sheep in the midst of wolves;[2] for they themselves knew only too well, how droves of these ravenous creatures sometimes sallied out, in winter time, to the uplands, and destroyed large numbers of the flocks. Stories were no doubt rife on the pastures, when shepherds met at the folds, or lay round the fire in cold weather, how such and such a "good shepherd" had gone out against the wolf or the bear that threatened the flock, as David had done, against the lion and the bear that prowled round his fold,[3] but, instead of killing them as he did, had himself been killed in defending his fleecy charge. "I," said the sinless One, "am like that good shepherd. I give My life for the sheep : not like the rabbis and scribes, your leaders ! They are no better than mere hirelings would be when dan-

[1] Matt. ix. 36 ; xi. 28 ; Mark vi. 34.
[2] Matt. x. 16.
[3] 1 Sam. xvii. 34.

ger lowered ; for a hireling has no heart or zeal in his duty, because the sheep are not his, and he seeks only his own gain, and has no loving interest in them, so that, when he sees a wolf coming, he runs away from the flock, for his life, and lets the wolf tear not a few, and scatter the rest. Your leaders, like him, seek only their own ends in putting themselves forward as your shepherds ; they act, not from love and in the spirit of self-sacrifice, but for their own interests. I am not like them." Shepherds who gave their hearts to their calling, then, as in all ages, grew to have relations of wondrous closeness, with their flocks ; giving each sheep its own name, to which it answered, coming on hearing it, and knowing its shepherd as he knew it ; refusing, moreover, to follow any one else, though it ran eagerly after its known friend, when he called it. In this, also, Christ said, He was like the good shepherd. All His sheep knew His voice, and He would, hereafter, bring them all together, from other pastures as well as those of Palestine, and join them in one great flock, of which He would be the one shepherd.[1]

Many a time had He seen, in some hollow of the bare hills, a poor sheep that had strayed, and would be devoured if not found by the shepherd and brought back to the fold ; and many a time had He seen the shepherd coming back with the lost one on his shoulders ; its hunger and faintness needing such pity ; and had heard the rejoicing over its recovery, as the whole story of the search was recounted to the group of brother shepherds, in the evening, at the fold. Simple Orientals know no limits to their joy at such an incident ; loud voices and gratulations rising on all sides as they hear of it. Ever ready to utilize all paral-

[1] John x. 11–16.

lels between the earthly and the spiritual, a scene like this served to image the joy of Heaven over the repentance of a sinner, won back by His infinite love. He, the Good Shepherd, who thus rescued him when lost, would lead him to the fold of God, where he would be safe forever! And as when the shepherd came home with the lost one, he would call together his friends and neighbours, telling them to rejoice with him, at his finding it; so, Christ assured them, there would be joy in heaven over one sinner that repents, more than over ninety and nine, who, in their selfsatisfied legal righteousness, thought they needed no repentance.[1]

As He wandered through the land, Jesus must have met the flocks of sheep and goats on their way to the Temple, for sacrifice, at some seasons, on all the lines of travel to the Holy City. I do not say roads, for, as stated already, there were no roads, in our sense, in Palestine, except the few made by the Romans, to connect the different military posts. The uplands of Moab, beyond the Jordan, known as the "Mishor"—from the boundless landscapes of soft rich undulating pastures—would be whitened, in the season, with thousands of sheep and lambs, on their way to the fords over the river; and every glen of the central mountain home of Israel, from the far south, to the distant green valleys of Upper Galilee, would also contribute its flocks, to secure part of the profits of this huge trade. It is easy to understand, therefore, that "the sheep-market in Jerusalem"[2] must have been immensely crowded, and that part of the thirty-five acres of the Temple grounds, might, with apparently justifiable excuses, be given over by the priestly authorities, in considera-

[1] Matt. xviii. 12; Luke xv. 4, 6. [2] John v. 2.

tion of heavy rents, to the cattle dealers, and sheep and goat sellers, who provided the victims for the altar; the limits of the market outside being too small for the multitude of dealers engaged in this business. Nor can we wonder, when we think what a cattle market is; its noise, its confusion; its manifold offensiveness; and, above all, the class of persons brought together, as drovers, attendants, and sellers, with their low morality and frequent foulness of speech; that the Holy One was seized with a Divine indignation, at the grounds of His Father's house being thus desecrated, and swept them all out, in sublime indifference to the vested rights of the dignified clergy. Yet, if they drew large revenues from this monstrous abuse, some churches still, to their unspeakable disgrace, fill their coffers, to some extent, from the rents of public-houses and gin-palaces, at least in Britain! The last notice by our Lord, of the meek creatures of the fold, is unspeakably touching. "Feed My sheep," said He, "feed My lambs;" repeating the tender words thrice to St. Peter,[1] and thus leaving us the endearment by which, for time and eternity, He knows them that are His. And what name could be more fitting for Himself, who was stainless innocence, and meek and lowly, than the thrice sacred one of "the Lamb of God!"

Among all the birds which lighted in the streets, or flew out of the fields, or soared overhead, or hid in the orchards or bushes, or hung in cages at the few latticed windows in the flat-roofed streets, or at the doors, none are so common in Palestine as the pigeon and the dove. But there are a great many other species of birds: not fewer, indeed, than four hundred; a large majority of them the same as our

[1] John xxi. 16.

own. Sparrows, larks, thrushes, blackbirds, robins, wrens, hedge-sparrows, linnets, both green and gray, chaffinches, goldfinches, buntings, starlings, and the familiar yellow-hammer, with many others which every country child in England knows and loves, were as well known and as dear to Christ, from His earliest days. Like the English child, also, He must a thousand times have watched the swallows and swifts, darting through the lanes of Nazareth, or skimming the ground over the valley below, or wheeling high in air over the gray hills. Our common swallow, our house-martin, and sand-martin, glided on the upper winds, or flashed hither and thither, faster than His wondering eyes could follow them, hawking for flies and moths to quiet the hungry mouths in the clay-built nests in the house eaves, or the snug homes dug out in the sandy banks. The chimney swallow, as with us, would startle Him by shooting out of a disused house, for there are no chimneys like ours in Palestine; and He would often, as a boy, watch the clay nests of the red swallow, hanging from the roof of a cave, or from a rocky shelf, or from a corner in some ruin, just as the nests of the house-martins abounded wherever a favouring corner offered, in the steep lanes of Nazareth.

At a later day, when He lived on the Lake of Galilee, He would see many kinds of gulls, sailing over the waters, or dipping into them, to secure some unfortunate fish, or resting quietly on their bosom. In fact, we must surround the Saviour with much, common, in nature, to Him and ourselves, before we realize His daily life. Every garden and olive yard in Palestine abounds, in summer, with the turtle dove, which can thus be easily obtained by even the poorest, costing nothing but the light trouble of securing

it; and domestic pigeons have been immensely numerous in all ages in the Holy Land, so that, whether they were turtle doves, or young pigeons, which Mary presented at her purification, or, as we should say, churching, her offering spoke of the extreme poverty of Joseph.[1] The number used at various rites in the Temple, accounts for the establishment of booths for their sale in the desecrated Temple grounds, where they formed a considerable source of revenue to some of the richer priests; Annas, the High Priest, among others, having large breeding-places for them, on the Mount of Olives. He, as well as many more, must, therefore, have borne a bitter grudge against our Lord, for His twice clearing the sacred confines of their profitable but unworthy bird-stalls.[2] Numerous, however, as was the ordinary pigeon, its "clouds" were far exceeded by the swarms of rock pigeons, which nestled in the countless cliffs of a country so seamed with gorges and ravines of all sizes. A little back from the Lake of Galilee, Christ would daily see the vast flocks of these birds, which find so inviting a breeding-place, in the steep cave-pierced precipices of the wady below the Horns of Hattin, as to have given it the name of "Wady Hamam," the valley of pigeons. That our Lord noticed creatures so lovable, with the sympathy natural to such a nature as His, is shewn in His counsel to His apostles, to be "harmless as doves," and it was a fitting tribute to their gentleness and innocence, that, at His baptism, "the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him."[3]

No feature of village life is more pleasing, in any part of the world, than the sight of the barn-door fowl; whether

[1] Luke ii. 22, 24. [2] Matt. xxi. 12; John ii. 14–16. [3] Matt. iii. 16.

we be arrested by the picturesqueness of the young brood, or the anxious and restless care of them by their staid mothers, or the glories of gay chanticleer, who sounds his clarion with clapping wings, as he leads the clan, aimlessly, hither and thither; each step proclaiming his gladness of heart and parading his martial bravado. Every place through which Jesus passed shewed Him this familiar charm, for though domestic poultry were unknown in Old Testament times, they had been introduced to Palestine during the Persian age, and soon multiplied there, as they do wherever they are taken. Cock-crowing was, indeed, in Christ's day, as it is still, a recognized mark of time through the night, especially in the East. He had very often to pass His nights in the humble cabins of the peasantry, where fowls and the family lived together; and we can imagine such a scene as must have been familiar to Him, by picturing the interior of a similar home to-day. The huts, built of clay, or, rather, mud, would line the narrow lane, deep with dust, and foul with all abominations, which formed the village street. If it were chilly in the evening, a fire of weeds and thorn stalks would be burning on the floor, on one side, at the wall; the thick smoke making its way out as it best could; for there was neither chimney nor window, and the open door alone offered it escape. The house-father, barefooted, but turbaned, was, we may be sure, sitting on the clay floor, in his patched cotton shirt, perhaps with a sheepskin over it, for a coat, the wool outside, ever and anon putting some fresh stalks on the smouldering fire; while the house-mother was breaking some eggs into her solitary pan, for the evening meal. A chance projection in the mud wall, or a rude niche, would shew a small clay lamp, which threw a feeble

light round it, making darkness visible as the night advanced. Overhead, as the reader may remember, in one corner, sticks had been put into the mud, as a roost for the pigeons and fowls of the little establishment, and below these lay the ass, or goat, or sheep; the floor of this back part being, as I have often said, slightly lower than the other, on which, in due time, some sleeping mats are laid down, though Christ, doubtless, often lay on the bare floor. But unbroken sleep is a luxury not to be expected, for the cock begins to crow three or four hours before daylight; an experience to which Jesus alludes when He says: "Watch ye, therefore, for ye know not when the master of the house cometh; at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning."[1] Nor was this the only disturbance of sleep, for the mother has to get up to refill the little miserable lamp, when she thinks it nearly burnt out, as nothing could be more unlucky than that it should be extinguished. After this, there is no more perfect quiet, for the good woman, forthwith, begins the labours of the day, by setting about the grinding of the barley or wheat needed for the day's bread, and the "sound of the mill-stones" murders sleep. The first cock-crowing is of course disturbing enough in the cabin where chanticleer gives it forth, but many are too sound asleep to be roused by it so early, and hence the second crowing, which is about two o'clock, was often spoken of as the "cock-crowing," without reference to the first. St. Mark speaks of Peter denying Christ "thrice, before the cock crow twice;"[2] but when the second crowing is reckoned, practically, the first, as is often done, this exactness of St. Mark does not involve any difference in his meaning, from the statement of the other

[1] Mark xiii. 35. [2] Mark xiv. 30.

evangelists, that the denial took place "before the cock crew."[1] To the tender care of the hen to protect her brood from any real or fancied danger, we are indebted for one of the sweetest images in the Gospels. Christ had often seen her loving solicitude, as she called her young to the shelter of her outspread wings, perhaps when the shadow of some bird of prey fell on the ground near by; and, remembering this, He calls out with saddest tenderness, to the city He had sought to save—now, finally, rejecting Him—"How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not."[2] Little birds appear to have been regularly sold in the bazaars for food in Christ's day, as they still are everywhere in the East, and with ourselves; various kinds, indeed all small birds, being spoken of then, as they are still among the fellahin of Palestine, by the common name translated "sparrows" in the Gospels. Hence we find Him asking, at one time, "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings?" and, at another, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?"[3] So constantly did He draw homely illustrations from the commonest things, to press His teaching vividly on the lowly crowds He addressed. But the long strings of little birds hung up for sale on the stalls, furnished many thoughts from which He drew His lessons. Around Him, in every landscape, the feathered creatures lived a happy, bright life, contented with winning, each day, their daily food; and slept calmly on the boughs at night, their head under their wings, with no care for the morrow. "Why cannot ye, O men," cried our Lord, thinking of this, "dismiss the anxious fretting

[1] Matt. xxvi. 34; Luke xxii. 34; John xiii. 38.
[2] Luke xiii. 34. [3] Matt. x. 29; Luke xii. 6.

about your maintenance, that consumes you? Why cannot ye cast your cares on Him who careth for you? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?"[1]

But a notice of the birds familiar to Christ would be very imperfect if the predatory classes were forgotten, for they abound in Palestine, as they do all over the East, and far south. I have seen nearly twenty hawks in the air at one time, over the Acropolis at Athens, and they are equally numerous in the Holy Land. There are, indeed, no fewer than fifteen names in the Bible for these carnivorous tribes, most of which must have been watched by Christ, in His countless journeys from place to place, in the open country. In the cliffs of Wady Hamam, behind Gennesaret, not fewer than five hundred griffin vultures at this time make their home, and they would be no less numerous in the days of our Lord. Sailing out, each morning, in quest of food, they rise to a great height, to look, far and near, over the wide landscape below them; soaring, one over the other, till the highest are quite out of sight. I remember seeing a large flight of them, motionless in the upper air, over the hills north of Samaria; their eyes, doubtless, ranging over all the wide circle beneath, for any fallen animal on which they could swoop down. Perhaps it was to this bird, or possibly to all the vultures of whatever kind, that Christ alluded when He said, "Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together."[2] Let an ass or a horse fall, and, although, when it sank, the sky shewed no speck of any "eagle," a whole flock of them will come in sight in a few moments,

[1] Matt. vi. 26. [2] Matt. xxiv. 28.

and the carcass will be covered with them in a few more, while the smaller vultures, not daring to approach while the larger ones are feeding, light in rows, to wait till their superiors have gorged themselves and flown heavily off. Ravens abound, also, for there are no fewer than eight species of the genus in Palestine. The caw of the rook and the chatter of the jackdaw mingle, in many parts of the land, with the croak of the large raven; Jerusalem, especially, being, one may say, their capital. It was very natural, therefore, that Christ, ever keeping His eyes on the natural life around Him, should have pointed a moral of the wisdom of loving dependence on the care of our heavenly Father, by telling His audience to "Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?"[1]

[1] Luke xii. 24.

CHAPTER XXI.

CHRIST'S ALLUSIONS TO NATURE—(*continued*).

In countries temperate round the year, like England, the generally uninviting race of the reptiles is happily not much known, but in a warmer climate like that of Palestine, they abound. Of lizards and serpents alone, it has probably not fewer than two hundred species, and other representatives of the order are equally numerous. The physical characteristics of the country are, in fact, specially favourable to reptile life; the heat for great part of the year, and the shelter offered by the countless rifts and holes in the soft limestone rocks, making a local paradise for the serpent tribes, while the sandy uplands of the south, and, indeed, of much of the country in every part, make an equal heaven to myriads of lizards, which one sees wherever he turns, flashing with inconceivable swiftness into some hiding-place, on the least alarm. Christ had an early acquaintance with both serpents and lizards, as a boy on the hills round Nazareth, and in His journeys in later life we may be sure they did not let Him forget them.

One of the commonest creatures He would thus come upon would be the tortoise, which shews itself everywhere, in summer, in its slow wanderings over the hills and plains, while all the streams and marshes would bring before Him the species which choose water rather than land. The

crocodile is even still found in the marches of the Zerka, as that stream crosses the plain of Sharon, and must have been much more common two thousand years ago. Lizards, as I have said, are countless, and in endless variety, including huge grass-green monsters with great spiny tails, met, often, in the wilderness of Judæa, where they sometimes grow two feet long, and a still huger creature, the monitor, which lives on the hot downs of the south, and boasts a length of from four to five feet, but, also, myriads of the tiny wall-lizards, which dart into crevices at the slightest movement. Chameleons hanging from the twigs of many of the low-growing bushes and trees, peculiar to the Holy Land, must have been often noticed by Christ, as they swung, head downwards, darting out their long yellow-red tongue at the passing insects on which they fed.

With snakes of various kinds, He would, like every native, be acquainted from His childhood, for no fewer than seven words are used for different varieties, in the Bible. It is probable, indeed, that there are at least forty kinds in Palestine; some of them very numerous; some very large, but most of them comparatively small. The deadly cobra may often have darted out of a heap of stones, or hid itself in them, as He was resting, on His long journeys in the south; for at Gerar, on the way to Beersheba, a large snake glided out of such a pile on which I was sitting, and hid itself in the weeds of a neighbouring furrow. There are at least six kinds of venomous snakes, two varieties of cobra and four of vipers, which, though not so much dreaded as the cobra, are very poisonous. That allusions should be found in the Gospels to creatures thus feared and hated, as types of all that is evil, is only what we might expect. The Devil is called in Revelation, "the

old serpent,"[1] but, to make the name fully expressive, it could hardly have been then used of the Evil One for the first time, and more probably was one by which he was known among the people round Christ. In any case, however, no more keen expression of moral condemnation was known, either to our Lord or to John the Baptist, than the term serpent, applied to any person or class. John, we are told, denounced not only "many of the Pharisees and Sadducees" who came to his baptism, but also "the multitude" who did so, as a "generation of vipers;"[2] and our Lord, on two occasions, hurls the same biting epithet at the Pharisees and scribes; in the second case calling them "serpents," as well;[3] terrible names to fix on the religious leaders of His people, for they implied that they poisoned where they claimed to instruct, and killed instead of saved. To enforce His exhortation to trust in the heavenly Father, as willing to give "good things to them that ask Him," Christ appeals to the parental feelings of His hearers. They, assuredly, would not give a serpent to one of their children who asked for a fish; the ordinary article of food on the shores of the Lake of Galilee, where He was when He thus spoke; and surely they might trust God, to be at least as considerate to His sons and daughters.[4] The serpent, as He had often seen, was wary in the extreme; gliding away from the least hint of danger; and He uses this fact, which had become a proverb, when He warns His disciples to be "wise as serpents."[5] And, at the last, after His resurrection, when He would encourage the apostles by assurances of His helping them, in all perils to which they might be exposed, He cannot, in a country

[1] Rev. xii. 9. [2] Matt. iii. 7; Luke iii. 7. [3] Matt. xii. 34; xxiii. 33.
[4] Matt. vii. 10; Luke xi. 11. [5] Matt. x. 16.

so infested by poisonous reptiles, say anything which He thinks more supporting, than that "they should take up serpents," as He had, at an earlier time, "given them authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions," as a symbol of their triumphing over all the power of the enemy: a mode of expression which seems to embody the prevailing idea of that age, that Satan was the author of all physical evil, even in the creation of noxious animals.[1]

It would be tedious to notice all the details of the lower nature amidst which our Lord moved; the homely sounds of the marshes, with their legions of croaking frogs; the beds of small white shells of freshwater snails, which, even now, fringe parts of the beach of the Lake of Galilee; the myriads of leeches which swarmed in every piece of stagnant water; the multitudinous caterpillars in the gardens, as with us, suggesting, by their gnawing away the green, that terrible figure of the worm that never dies;[2] or the countless scorpions, which needed that every single stone where one proposed to rest, in the hot months, be turned up, to look for the horrible creature. Allied to the spiders, but exactly like minute lobsters in form, these venomous pests abound in every part of Palestine; in houses, in chinks of walls, among ruins, and under stones, alike in moist and dry places. Christ must constantly have been on the lookout for them, for almost every third stone hides one in the hot season. Their sting is very painful, burning so that no fitter name could be invented for the most terrible kinds of scourges, than that of "the scorpion." We read, indeed, of the hideous stinging locusts of Revelation, that "their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man."[3] Nothing, therefore, could be a more

[1] Mark xvi. 18; Luke x. 19. [2] Mark ix. 44. [3] Rev. ix. 5.

monstrous idea than that a father should give a scorpion to his child, when he asked an egg; and, hence, Christ left His audience to think, how impossible it was that God, who was so immeasurably more loving than any earthly parent, could give any but the richest answer to those who prayed for "good gifts" from Him.[1] And what could be more encouraging, as a pledge that they should overcome all their trials, than to tell the apostles, that He would give them power to tread on scorpions; the danger they, moment by moment, most instinctively dreaded?

Like all hot countries, Palestine is infested by every form of insect plague, so that no picture of the daily experiences of our Lord would be true to fact, that omitted what this implies. Vermin of all kinds are abundant in the East, beyond the conception of cleaner races. The country people among whom Jesus chiefly laboured are, even now, filthy in the extreme in their habits, while both their persons and huts are apt to communicate disgusting results to any one of ordinary cleanliness. I never saw such specimens of dirtiness even among North American Indians, as I have seen in some of the fellahin of Palestine, and with these Christ spent a great part of His life; at what outlay of loving pity and self-denial it is impossible to realize. But, almost worse than the odious vermin at which I have hinted, is the omnipresent plague of fleas. A worthy friend of mine, who often had to visit the villages of the Hauran, told me he was glad to mount on the high clay ovens, and stand there through the night, to escape them; and the miseries I endured in the "castle" of the sheik at Beit Jebrin, are an undying horror in my memory. Nor was it much better, when one tried to rest,

[1] Luke xi. 12.

at noon, in some apparently friendly shade; for fleas presently rose in myriads from the dust and refuse on the ground, and made instant change of place imperative. Tiberias is spoken of as the capital of the king of the fleas; where he holds his court, surrounded by innumerable subjects from every country on the globe. And as it is now, it doubtless was in the days of our Lord.

The only reference to locusts in the Gospels, is their mention as the food of the Baptist, but Christ must have constantly seen them offered for sale, in great strings, in the bazaars, as food bought by the very poor. In His abode in the wilderness of Judæa, moreover, during His temptation, the air would be full of them, springing, or flying, from point to point, for they are always found in countless numbers in the bare wastes. In His well-loved Galilee, Christ would be familiar with the bee and with bee-keeping; for, even now, both are a characteristic of these delightful parts. In every village He would pass numbers of simple hives; mere wide tubes of sun-dried mud, about four feet long, closed with mud at each end, except a small hole for the entrance and exit of the bees. These would be laid one on another, so as to make a triangle, sometimes large enough to contain eighty or a hundred hives; the whole plastered over with a coating of mud for coolness; boughs, moreover, being laid on them, and a bough stuck up at each end, for the bees to light upon. The hum of the bee was thus familiar to Him from childhood, and wherever He went He would see it half buried in the cups of the flowers, as with us, in search of the sweets it loves. Nor would it sail past Him only in the neighbourhood of human homes; for the rifts and clefts of the limestone rocks offered everywhere, over all the land, innumerable

safe shelters for wild bees, which, accordingly, abound, in countless swarms. The Psalmist, therefore, spoke in literal truth when he wrote of God promising, "With honey out of the rock would I have satisfied you."[1] And in His evening quiet, how often must the moth, which so constantly destroys the treasured stores of robes and garments, so prized by the rich in the East, have come to the feeble light of his mother's cottage! Nor had He overlooked the gnats, which, in so many kinds, are a pest to every one in the Holy Land. At Bethlehem my face was bitten into a general eruption by the mosquitoes, and they are as bad at Nazareth. Their smallness served to make them a fit illustration in Christ's realistic addresses. "Ye blind guides (that is, ye rabbis), who strain out a gnat (from your drink), and swallow a camel!"[2]

The bareness of the hills of Judæa and of the south must not lead one to suppose that the landscapes amidst which Christ moved were, as a whole, treeless and uninviting, though there were, then as now, few trees south of Cæsarea, worthy to be mentioned alongside the majestic growths of our own country. Even in Solomon's time, timber of any size had to be brought from Lebanon, and the houses of to-day are built of stone arches, because there is no wood. But fruit-trees, and others of much beauty, though moderate height, adorn the view in countless horizons. I shall never forget the almond orchards, with their clouds of faintly pink blossom, that brightened the plain at Medjil, as I rode towards Gaza; and Christ must often have feasted His eyes in early spring, on the billows of intermingled peach and almond blossom on the slopes of Gerizim, and over the sweet little valley between it and

[1] Ps. lxxxi. 16. [2] Matt. xxiii. 24.

Ebal, where Shechem stood, embowered in orchards. Like the peach and the apricot, its blossom appears before the new leaves, and it is so early that one sometimes finds it in flower even in January, whence it has the name by which Christ knew it, and by which it is known now—"the waker"—from its being the first of all the trees in the country to wake from the sleep of winter. The apple and pear, also, were familiar to Him, for even now there are apple orchards near Gaza, and the pear grows wild in Galilee; its cultivation having been neglected in later ages, though it is still grown as a fruit-tree in Hermon and Lebanon. The quince and the orange seem to have been brought from Persia, after the Captivity, and hence Christ would walk under the shadow of trees laden with the golden globes and the peach blush, so delightful on the sea plains still. The apricot and the citron were the ornaments of many villages through which he passed, and the fig was everywhere. One of the earliest trees to shoot, it, like the almond, puts out its fruit buds before its leaves appear. The old leaves are shed in November, but the sleep of the tree is so short, that, in central Palestine, its young buds are fast opening towards the end of February, though the leaves do not come out for a month later. It was thus a recognized herald of summer, as Christ notes in His words, "When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh."[1] The fig was one of the chief objects of local culture, long before the Jews came into Palestine, for the spies carried back some, to shew the richness of the land,[2] and from the first, it was one of the chief articles of the food of the people, so that there could hardly be a more pointed

[1] Matt. xxiv. 32. [2] Num. xiii. 23.

COUNTRY TOWARDS EDOM.

image of general distress, than the failure of the fig harvest.[1]

Many a time we may picture the Master delighted, in His innocent simplicity of soul, with the early fig, ripe, already, in June, and a special prize, "falling into the mouth of the eater at the shaking of the tree,"[2] and many a time, later in the year, making a meal of the dry fruit, which, pressed into round cakes, are a permanent portion of the supplies of a household, and a favourite provision for a journey, being so easily carried. They are kept in the "bosom" of the cotton shirt of the peasant, and, with a draught of water or sour milk, serve all his modest wants. Such would often be the dinner of our Lord. In the bazaars, great quantities of these fig-cakes are exposed for sale; so general is their use, as, indeed, it has always been.[3] Christ would see them in the bazaars at Jerusalem, and would, further, often hear of the use of the fig as a cure for boils and swellings, for it was in as great vogue in this way, as it had been in the time of Hezekiah.[4] The fig seldom grows more than from ten to fifteen feet high, but its broad dark leaves overlap each other so, that the shade they give is greatly prized; very few of the hot sunbeams being able to make their way through it, especially when the branches of a vine growing at its foot, twine through its foliage. How often must the Redeemer have sat in this paradise of His land, to enjoy the cool shade![5] The great fig harvest is in August, though in some parts it is earlier, and in others later. The leaves are fully out at Ascalon, several weeks before they appear on the high

[1] Jer. viii. 13; Hos. ii. 12; Joel i. 12; Hag. ii. 19.
[2] Nah. iii. 12.
[3] 1 Sam. xxv. 18; xxx. 12.
[4] Isa. xxxviii. 21.
[5] Isa. xxxvi. 16; Mic. iv. 4; Zech. iii. 10.

ground round Nazareth, while Josephus tells us that in the rich plain of Gennesaret, fresh figs could be plucked nearly all the year.[1] That our Lord should have cursed the fig tree on which there were leaves but no fruit, is explained when we remember that the fruit appears before the leaves, and that in a tree so out of the common in its development, those round Him would expect that fruit would be also present, though it was not as yet the season for it. The fitness of the incident for a lesson on the worthlessness of profession without practice, was exactly suited to the habit of the great Teacher, of illustrating moral truths from nature.[2]

The vine is seen, now, in Palestine, only in a few places; Mohammed, like Jonadab, the son of Rechab, whose conduct in the matter is so commended by the prophet, having forbidden, in his zeal for sobriety, the use of wine. Some Jews, native Christians, and foreigners, especially the Germans on the plain of Sharon, grow the vine for the sake of wine from it, but their vineyards are very insignificant, taking the country as a whole. Yet Palestine is fitted for the culture of the vine beyond most countries; the soft limestone of its hills and the warmth of its long summer, suiting the grape exceptionally. Hence, from the earliest ages, its vineyards have been the glory of the land, and one of the great sources of its commercial well-doing. Christ passed among vineyards, everywhere, in the hills, and in His wanderings over all the land, must often have found delight in the glories of the famous grape districts, the boast of the Hebrews; the vineyards of Engedi, that one spot of luxuriant fertility, on the west side of the Dead Sea;[3]

[1] Jos. *Jud. K.* iii. 10, 8. [2] Matt. xxi. 19. [3] Cant. i. 14.

the long sweeping valleys of Hebron and its neighbourhood, from which the spies carried to Moses the huge clusters of the brook Eshcol ;[1] the glorious richness of the slopes of Gerizim, with their wealth of billowy vineyards, still lovely ;[2] the pride of Carmel, then a sea of vines on its rounded hills ;[3] and the mantling verdure of the hillsides of Gilboa, above the mound of Jezreel.[4] The plain of Gennesaret, on the border of which He lived, lying, as it did, more than six hundred feet below the Mediterranean, and thus possessing an Egyptian climate, yielded ripe grapes, if Josephus can be trusted,[5] ten months of the year, so that our Lord may be said to have lived, day by day, amidst blossoming or ripening vineyards. Allusions to the vine are, hence, frequent in the Gospels. The householder, who, in the parable, planted a vineyard, takes the same steps as his descendant would take to-day ; clearing away the stones from the soil, to build a wall round it, or setting a hedge of prickly pear, to keep out the foxes, or wild swine, or cattle ;[6] hewing out, in the limestone rock, two vats or troughs, one over the other, for treading the grapes and collecting the juice ; and building a tower for the keepers, and those labourers whose cabins lay too far off to let them go to them at night ; separate huts in the vineyard not being thought safe enough, by people who always have their homes close together, for mutual protection.[7] Christ tells us how diligently the mattock was used to break up the soil, and destroy the hurtful weeds, and how the vine was pruned back.[8] Purple grapes were most liked, so that

[1] Num. xiii. 24.
[2] Judg. ix. 27.
[3] 2 Chron. xxvi. 10.
[4] 1 Kings xxi. 1.
[5] Jos., *Jud. W.*, iii. 10, 8.
[6] Ps. lxxx. 13 ; Cant. ii. 15 ; Isa. v. 1-5.
[7] Matt. xxi. 33.
[8] John xv. 1.

the comparison of the wine to blood, at the Last Supper, naturally suggested itself.[1] White wine, on the contrary, is most in vogue now, in the two special centres of vine growing—Bethlehem and Hebron. The general grape harvest fell in October, but Christ would notice ripe bunches in the markets as early as July, and in years when the final yield was abundant, and the early rains began soon, He would thus see "the treader of grapes busy till the sower had begun his autumn work."[2] How often must He have been rejoiced by the songs of the grape gatherers and of the treaders of the wine troughs! For all joy, of man or lower creature, would kindle responsive joy in a soul so tenderly sympathetic as His! The process of wine-making was, of course, known to one who had a hundred times watched it in His childhood, and had very possibly helped in the vintage of neighbours, in Nazareth. The emptying of the juice, from the wine trough, into the skin "bottles" of the country, to ferment, supplied Him with a forcible justification of His breaking away from the old forms of Judaism, which were unfit for His teaching. Old "bottles," patched and worn thin, would not stand the "working" of the new wine, which, therefore, could not be put into them, since it would "burst the bottles and be spilled, and the bottles would perish;"[3] and, similarly, what the old bottles would be to new wine, worn-out Judaism would be to His new doctrine. As we find the apostles said to have drunk "new," that is, sweet, unfermented, wine, in May, at Pentecost, when the wine of the year before would long ago have fermented, and the new grapes had not yet ripened, it seems as if it must have been a preparation from raisins, which are often used to make

[1] Matt. xxvi. 28. [2] Amos ix. 13. [3] Luke v. 37.

drink, by steeping them in water, and then distilling the result, adding spices for flavour. If so, we may think of our Lord as, also, from time to time, using a beverage like this, which is very pleasant. That He did drink wine is shewn by the miracle at Cana, for He would never have made for others, what He did not, Himself, think it right to take. He tells us, moreover, that His enemies spoke of Him in comparison with John, as "a wine-bibber,"[1] and He told the apostles, at the Last Supper, that He would "not drink, henceforth, of this fruit of the vine."[2] The vine, with its clustering fruit, lent itself naturally, in a land where it was seen everywhere, as a touching emblem of His relations to His disciples. He was "the true vine," said He; "they, the branches." Broken off from Him, they could no more bear fruit, than the branch of a vine separated from the parent stem. Nor must they wonder at trouble, even if they continued faithful; for just as the vine-dresser pruned the fruitful branch, that it might become still more so, they would be pruned by trials, to secure an ever-increasing yield of devotedness to Him.[3] The steward hiring labourers to go into his lord's vineyard brings up, for the moment, another aspect of the old-world life amidst which the Redeemer moved;[4] while the parable of the two sons, directed to go and work in their father's vineyard, reveals the simplicity of that life even among the well-to-do.[5] That Christ should have allowed the use of wine, when the Nazarite, as especially vowed to God, was prohibited from tasting it, and when its abuse was made the ground of priests being required to abstain from it, during their term of duty, has made it hard for some to

[1] Matt. xi. 19. [2] Matt. xxvi. 29. [3] John xv. 1-5.
[4] Matt. xx. 1. [5] Matt. xxi. 28.

decide how to act in reference to using it. The difficulty seems to be solved, however, when we remember, that, with Christ, free action was everything, and morals enforced by command, of no worth. He leaves every one to apply, for himself, the one law of His dispensation; adoring love of the All Perfect One, and absolutely unselfish love of our fellow-man. Had He lived in a country where, as in Great Britain, strong drink ruins millions of those for whom He died, would that love which let itself be nailed on the cross for our redemption, have hesitated, for a moment, to discountenance utterly the indulgence which would oppose that love and limit the sweep of that redemption? To take the same attitude to strong drink in a country, say, like Italy, where, amidst universal vineyards, one never sees excess, but only rational use of their gift, in the strictest and most innocent moderation, would be foolish; and this was the position in which Palestine stood in the matter, in Christ's day, as it still does in our own, for neither in Italy nor in Palestine did I ever see an intoxicated man. But in a country like ours, how would the great heart of the Son of Mary have dashed aside the cup which, by our abuse of it, is a symbol of the ruin of unnumbered victims? The right to Christian liberty in moderate indulgence, would never have been heard of in the presence of the imploring eyes, and the infinitely higher claims, of love!

Christ would rejoice, as the wanderer through Palestine does to-day, in the variety of trees He met, even in a country comparatively so bare of wood. On the banks of the lower Jordan dense masses of the feathery tamarisk were waving, and the successors of the grove of them, planted long ages before by Abraham, at Beersheba, still threw a grateful shade over the dry and sandy borders of the

famous wells, at which the Father of the Faithful encamped. In the desert, Jesus would see the straggling broom, or "juniper," as our version calls it, under a bush of which Elijah lay down;[1] and over all the land, from Hebron northwards, the locust tree or carob, from the pods of which, the common food of swine, the prodigal, as he rested under its dark, glossy, evergreen, dense leafage, was fain to abate his hunger.[2] The mulberry tree is mentioned by Christ where He tells the apostles, "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye would say to this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it would obey you."[3] The "sycamine" should be translated the "mulberry." The myrtle flourished on every hillside about Bethlehem and Hebron, relieving their bareness in favoured spots, with fragrant green, while Carmel, and Tabor, and indeed a thousand slopes over all central Palestine, offered the same refreshing loveliness to the Man of Sorrows. Three kinds of oak, much smaller than our own, but still commanding and beautiful, greeted His eyes in His journeys. The rocky hills are covered with a dense growth of a stunted kind, from eight to twelve feet high, rich in small evergreen leaves, and prolific in acorns; and clumps of well-grown trees, between Nazareth and Tabor, and in the sweet glades near Michmash, made these parts, as they make many others, almost like an English park; delighting my heart as I rode through them. But in Christ's day, trees of various kinds may well have been much more numerous. Among those familiar to our Lord, I must not pass over the silver-leaved olive, so abundant, and so much prized from the earliest times, that one of the great attractions of the "Promised Land" was its being

[1] 1 Kings xix. 4, 5. [2] Luke xv. 16. [3] Luke xvii. 6.

"a land of the oil olives."[1] In hardly a landscape was Christ out of sight of this, the most frequently seen tree of the Holy Land. On the broad plains of Sharon and Philistia they were round Him, far and near, as they still are round the passing traveller. The slopes of the valleys on which Bethlehem looks down, are pale greenish gray with clumps and stretches of them, and they reach along the sides of the great valley of Hebron, in rivalry of its glorious vineyards. The sweet opening from the wide plain of the Muknah, like that plain itself, is rough with olive groves, which even creep far up the acclivities of Gerizim. In central Palestine, every valley and every hill shews them in hundreds, and, no doubt, did so when Christ walked among them. The bare stony hills round Jerusalem and away towards Hebron, were apparently clothed, in that age, with broad lines of them, as the terraces still kept up, under Bethlehem, are now; and they flourished, if not in Christ's day, in the old days of the psalmists, and as they do still, in the wide grounds of the Temple enclosure, now that of the Dome of the Rock. Nor can we forget the spot, sacred beyond almost any other on earth, where, under the shadow of the walls of the Holy City, our Lord wrestled in the supreme agony of the olive garden of Gethsemane. Yet, strange to say, the olive is not once mentioned in the Gospels!

Among the beauties of the landscapes amidst which Christ lived, no tree was more picturesque than the "feathery palm." It could never indeed have been common in the central Jewish hills, which are hardly warm enough for it, but it abounded on the coast plains, and was not long out of sight even in many parts of the mountains. Thus, at

[1] Deut. viii. 7, 8.

Nazareth, there is, at this time, not far from the village, a grove of palms in a hollow of the hills on the west, to which the boy Jesus must often have wandered in His rambles with His young companions. To this day, moreover, it is to be seen along the coast, from Beyrout to the far south, bending gracefully over the mud villages, which dot the sea line, from point to point. At Gaza, wild looking orchards of palms, figs, and fruit trees, stretch up the town hill, behind great hedges of prickly cactus. There, and at Ascalon, there are, perhaps, more palms than in any other part of the Holy Land; for Beyrout is in Syria. Here and there, also, Christ would pass below clumps of them, beside villages, on the broad lowland plains, from Carmel southwards; then a wonderful contrast in their rich cultivation, to the wastes they present in our time. Even in Jerusalem He would look up to the rich green fronds, from six to twelve feet long, arching over Him, forty, fifty, or even eighty feet from the ground; for there are some in the Holy City even now. He would meet the palm, also, now and then, in the central hills, for Deborah once lived under a palm tree on the mountains of Ephraim. Indeed, it must have been comparatively common in most parts of the land, for the coins of both Shechem, and Sepphoris, behind Nazareth, were ornamented with its beautiful form, in Christ's day, and it was put as an emblem of the country as a whole, on the medals struck to celebrate the triumphs of Vespasian and Titus.

He would see it, also, when He crossed the Jordan at the upper ford, opposite Bethshean; and, when He climbed the steep pass leading to the mountains of Gilboa and the plain of Esdraelon, it would meet Him at Engannim,

[1 Judg. iv. 5.]

for at both these places it still survives; and when He looked across the great plain, to the white, flat-roofed houses of His own Nazareth, which gleam from their height, on the traveller looking from the farthest edge of the fertile expanse, He would, we may fancy, see clumps at Jezreel, and elsewhere, though there are none there now; while Tabor, and the slopes on which lies Nain, could hardly have been without some. Gennesaret, moreover, beside which Christ lived so long, was, as Josephus informs us, famous for the palm. "Walnuts," says he, "which of all trees, require the coldest air, flourish there in vast plenty; there are palm trees, also, which grow best in hot air, and fig trees and olives grow near them, which, require a more temperate air."[1] But it was at Jericho, and the paradise then round it, sloping down to the Jordan, five or six miles off, that our Lord would see the only ripe dates, for the palm does not yield them farther north than some miles below Gaza. The whole Jordan depression, in those days, must have been rich in palm groves, for Jericho was known as "the city of palms," and hundreds of palm trunks, washed down by the Jordan floods, lie, even now, preserved by saturation with salt, on the lonely shores of the Dead Sea. Jesus was often at Jericho, and must have sat, many a time, in the shadow of the lofty crowns of the palm orchards, far up in the air, above their slender stems. The Mount of Olives, however, would then be equally beautified, for when He entered Jerusalem in His lowly triumph, attended by a great crowd, some spread their garments in the way, that He might ride in state over the tapestry thus created on the moment, while others strewed His path with branches, as their only substitute for flowers, and still

[1] Jos., *Jud. W.*, iii. 10, 8.

others took branches of palms, and streamed out from Jerusalem bearing them as symbols of high honour, to meet Him as the King of Israel, who came in the name of Jehovah.[1] The waving of palm branches had, from the earliest times, been an expression of public rejoicing among the Hebrews, and the Mount of Olives had long before witnessed sights like that which closed the ministry of the Saviour, for, a hundred and forty years before His birth, Simon Maccabæus, having regained possession of Jerusasalem for the nation, entered it amidst the loud welcomes of grateful thousands, who acclaimed him "with thanksgiving, and branches of palm trees, and with harps and cymbals, and with viols, and hymns, and songs, because there was destroyed a great enemy out of Israel."[2] Yet there is no mention of the palm by Christ, in the Gospels. It has always, however, been a favourite symbol with the sacred writers. The Psalmist, looking at it, rising in its glory in the Temple grounds, uses it as an emblem of the righteous, who, like it, were "planted in the house of the Lord, and flourished in the courts of our God, bringing forth fruit in old age, and full of sap and green."[3] And the great multitude of the redeemed are represented as standing "before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands."[4]

The beautiful scarlet and orange red, bell-shaped flowers of the pomegranate, were another of the delights of the orchards, in spring, as Christ passed by; and the bright-red, orange-like fruit continued the sweet glow of colour till autumn. In Galilee, the shadow of tall poplars was familiar to Him. Both the white and black mulberry tree,

[1] Matt. xxi. 8.
[2] 1 Macc. xiii. 51.
[3] Ps. xcii. 13.
[4] Rev. vii. 9.

then called the "sycamine,"[1] were very common on the sides of the tracks along which our Lord toiled, in His unwearying pilgrimages of love, over all the land. The sycamore, also, with its low-spreading branches and dark foliage, is still a favourite wayside tree, as it was when Zacchæus climbed on one of the thick boughs, stretching out almost level from the trunk; a vantage ground easily reached, for climbing into the sycamore branches is a special delight of children, in their play. The tree grows only in the mild climate of the sea-coast plains, and in the sultry heat of the Jordan valley, and hence the notice of it in connection with the story of Zacchæus, who lived at Jericho, is an incidental sign of the truthfulness of the narrative.[2] Walnut trees flourished, in Christ's day, on the plain of Gennesaret, and there are still some fine ones beside Hattin, on the heights behind Tiberias, so that our Lord must have known both the fruit and the tree as well as we do. The oleander, which adorns every wady from one end of the land to the other, must have been a noted favourite with Him, from the splendour of its blossoms, which display their red and pink glories, in wave upon wave, along every watercourse, and lakelet, or lake, and fringe the whole course of the Jordan, from Cæsarea Philippi almost to Jericho; the flowers coming out in the early spring, which, however, is over in the lower-lying parts of the country, before it has begun in the higher. From Jerusalem to Jericho it covers the bottom of the deep cleft of the Wady Kelt. It marks out the course of the Kishon on Esdraelon, and rises in multitudinous clumps, from place to place, over the rich plains of Phœnicia and Sharon. Like the osier, a kind of willow, in

[1] Luke xvii. 6. [2] Luke xix. 4.

growth, form, leaf, and place of flourishing, it would seem as if the oleander, rather than any of the scarce Palestine plants of the family, were "the willow by the water-courses" of which the Bible speaks. Mint, anise, rue, and cummin,[1] in Christ's day, dotted the rough gardens, which alone the East knows; plots of barley, the main food, with broken straw, of the countless asses, and even of the oxen of Palestine, then, as now, and the bread of the poor, were seen everywhere; patches of beans, a common article of food among the poor, scented the air with their blossoms as early as the end of February; beds of gourds, cucumbers, pumpkins, and watermelons, abounded; the sweet blue of the flowers of flax, varied the sameness of the wide unenclosed commons, on which every kind of crop grew, side by side, as now, with no dividing fences or hedges, over the wide landscape. Meadows, in our sense, were virtually unknown, for the hills are bare in many parts, and a green carpet, such as more temperate regions know, is found only in some favoured hollow, or on the moist edges of a lake, as where the multitude was miraculously fed, in the ascending valley, at the entrance of the Jordan into the Lake of Galilee. Lentils grew in many an olive-yard, or on the hillsides, for, then, as now, they were much in favour. Wheat waved far and near, in its season, for Palestine has always been a great country for its growth. But the land was far from being cultivated to the extent to which it would have been, by other than Orientals; for slovenliness has always marked Eastern agriculture, as we see from many passages of Scripture, and find at the present time. Brambles, thorns, thistles, and wild growths of numerous kinds, matted the ground in too many places.

[1] Matt. xxiii. 23; Luke xi. 42.

"Do men gather figs of thistles?" asks Christ.[1] The sower found part of his patch useless, from the thorns which grew up in it;[2] and thorns were easily at hand to plait a mock crown of them, for the brow of the Suffering One. So plentiful indeed were thorny plants, that their crackling under the pot was as common as it is to-day, when the peasants, periodically, cut down the stalks of whole acres of thorns and thistles, to store them for fuel. But I have filled up the landscape round our Lord as fully as is needed, to help us to realize, in some measure, the natural world in which He moved; the country amidst which He spent His life; the storehouse of emblems and lessons, from which He drew the immortal parables and discourses, which the Gospels preserve to us.

[1] Matt. vii. 16. [2] Matt. xiii. 7.

CHAPTER XXII.

ALLUSIONS IN THE PARABLES.

Among the thirty parables of our Lord preserved to us in the Gospels, a rough classification, such as alone is possible where there is so much overlapping, might assign ten to subjects drawn from country life; and twenty to suggestions from the general life of the community. Many of these I have more or less fully illustrated in previous chapters, but not a few of the allusions, which will help us to realize Christ's everyday life, remain still unnoticed, and cannot fail to interest. I shall, therefore, glance at each, taking them in the two divisions I have named, and gathering from them whatever sets our Lord more vividly before us, as a man among men.

The scene of the parable of the Sower is the pleasant shore of the Lake of Galilee, on which I have often sat, watching the crystal-clear wavelets breaking on the beds of little white shells and shining gravel, and looking across to the level bluffs of the eastern side, stretching, north and south, in a long wall, indented with gullies eaten into them by the winter storms, and coloured, in varied light and shade, as the day advanced, and the sky was clouded or bright, and the sun higher or lower. Looking away from the water, to the west, the bank rose slightly, a short distance off, with a border of oleanders in many places, glowing in springtime with pink blossoms, lovely to Christ as to

us; and behind this, the arable land swelled up, in slower or steeper ascent, towards the gray, rounded hills, very like those of the south of Scotland. I often saw the peasant "going forth to sow," with his light plough on his shoulder, or across his ass, which he always rides bare-backed. The patch of barley or wheat he proposed to raise was, in many cases, quite a distance from his cabin, so that he had, indeed, to "go forth;" thinking it better to keep out of the hands of Arabs, by living with his brethren on some hill village, than, alone, nearer his bit of ground. The spot on the slopes, to which he looked for his harvest, would be very unlike our fields, for the soft green of his little crop would lie amidst rocky shelves, loose stony ground, and tangles of thorns, which flourish wherever the soil has been broken up. That some seed fell "by the wayside," was inevitable; for "the way," in Palestine, is only a path, and is ploughed up like the rest of the ground, to be trodden hard again very soon, by man and beast, to the destruction of any seed that may have fallen on it. For it is not to be forgotten that there is no ploughing in the East, in our sense, but only a slight scratching of the ground, with the poor one-handled apology for a plough, so that a path disturbed by the passage of such a thing is not, to any troublesome degree, spoiled for its proper uses. The early rains of the late autumn had prepared the soil for our Lord's sower, and the "latter" rains of spring had filled out the ears of the little crop. There had been no weeding, or not much; too many spots had proved full of the shoots of some of the twenty kinds of thorny growths, of which the Bible tells us, and young grain spikes had been choked; the countless finches had picked up what they could, where it had lain uncovered; travellers along the path through

the plot, had trodden still more under foot; and some had fallen where the limestone rock ran close below the surface, leaving no sufficient depth of soil. There, the seed had shot up quickly, from the warmth of the stone below, and the moisture, which it kept from sinking too deep; but the fiery days of unclouded sunshine had followed, and had burned the grass out of the ground, and made the hillsides as bare as a highway, and scorched into withered stalks the shallow-rooted tall straw on the shelf of underlying stone. Yet there was a little harvest, after all, on the good ground. At present, wheat yields only from twelve to sixteen fold, but barley often returns fifty fold, and the coarse dhourra, or millet, eaten by the very poor in the East, but only by birds among us, gives the sower, at times, even a hundred and fifty, or as much as two hundred fold. But the yield of grain appears to have been larger in Christ's day than it is now, for he speaks of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred fold.[1] St. Mark and St. Luke append to their narrative of the parable of the Sower, the counsel not to put one's lamp "under a bushel, or under the bed, but on the stand;"[2] dehortations which we should hardly think of for ourselves; our lamps and domestic customs being so different from those of the East. The lamps of Palestine are, to-day, no doubt, just what they were two thousand years ago; small clay toys, holding two or three spoonsful of oil; a hole at one end for the rag which serves for wick, and a teacup-like handle at the other, to let it be carried about. "Stands" are only found in better-class houses, but the seven-branched "candlestick" in the old Temple shews that lamp-holders, with a number of stands, were not unknown in Hebrew antiquity, though in Christ's day,

[1] Matt. xiii. 8. [2] Mark iv. 21.

Greek and Roman refinement is sufficient to account for them.

Among the poor, with whom our Lord had most to do, a bed is, as a rule, only a mat, laid at night on the floor, or on the clay seat that runs along the wall in some larger houses; but I have often seen bedsteads of slight and rude construction, on which the sleeping mats were laid, and under these a lamp could, of course, be set. The "bushel" is the Roman modius, a measure about equal to our peck, used for grain and the like, and common, we may suppose, among the grain-dealers in Christ's day. St. Mark goes on to repeat another counsel, assigned, elsewhere, to the Sermon on the Mount,[1] "Take heed what we hear; with what measure we mete, it shall be measured to us again." His hearers would at once understand the allusion. When grain is bought in quantities, it is brought in bags which are always measured again by a person whose trade it is to do this. Squatting crosslegged on the ground, he fills the grain with his hands into a "timneh," which he shakes when it is full, to make the contents solid. He then refills it, twists it round scientifically, and makes a second settling of the grain, afterwards refilling it. He then presses down the whole with his hands, and at last, when he cannot make it hold more, raises as high a cone as possible on the top; only this being thought "good measure."

The parable of the Tares[2] was vividly illustrated by many grain patches which I saw in Palestine. One I recollect, at Dan, the ancient Laish. It was too soon to notice whether any tares were amongst the soft green of some wheat, shooting up strongly on what had once been

[1] Matt. vii. 1; Mark iv. 24; Luke vi. 38. [2] Matt. xiii. 24–30.

the site of the city of the Phœnicians, which the raiders from Dan surprised and plundered; but there were probably great quantities of them, for the "zawan," which is just the word "zizanion" of the Gospels, translated "tares" in our version, abounds in that part, and troubles the peasant greatly. Before it ripens it is so like wheat, that it is often left growing till the patch is reaped, lest "while men pluck up the tares, they should root up also the wheat with them." On my way to Samaria, indeed, I saw women and children weeding in the field while the crop was growing, but it was to get fodder for their live stock, and is, in any case, very questionable policy, as tares and wheat are so easily mistaken for each other while green. When ripe, however, there is no risk of this misfortune; any one being then able to distinguish the hated weed, the seed of which, as far as possible, is most anxiously kept from mixing with the grain, since it is in a measure poisonous. Nothing could, therefore, be more worthy of the bitterest enemy than to sow tares in a crop, for, even if it did not make the harvest quite worthless, it would cause vast labour and anxiety, while the soil would in all probability be poisoned for years to come.

In the parable of the Mustard Seed, our Lord speaks of that seed as the smallest of any plant, but this was only a popular mode of expression then in vogue; not a scientific statement, for there are many seeds which are much smaller. The Jews so habitually used the mustard seed as the ideal of minuteness, that we often find it employed for this in the Talmud. Thus in one place we read that "he who swallows a living creature that is unclean, transgresses; unless it be as small as a grain of mustard seed;" in another, the size of the heavens is taken as the extreme of

magnitude, and the mustard seed as the extreme of littleness. "From one branch of a stalk of mustard," says a third, "they got more than nine quarts of seed; so small was the grain!" As to the height to which the mustard grew, the language used was much like that in the Gospels, for one rabbi says, that he had a mustard tree in his garden the stalk of which he climbed as if he had been climbing to the top of a fig tree.[1] In the Koran, also, we find the same use of this standard of comparison, for we are told that the merit or guilt of an action will be weighed at the resurrection, even if it be of the weight of a mustard seed only.[2] Orientals are accustomed to speak hyperbolically, and the use of their current proverbial expressions, however tumid to us, does not, in any measure, commit Christ to more than the employing the everyday speech of those round Him. Mustard, as the quotations I have given shew, was grown in gardens; as, in the Gospels, it is said to have been sowed by a man in his patch of ground.[3] Black mustard, the kind most common at this time, both wild and cultivated, often grows to the height of from eight to twelve feet, and is frequented by numbers of little birds such as goldfinches and linnets, who light on its slender twigs, to pick out the seed, which is a favourite with them. Since, however, the Gospel expressly speaks of a garden plant which grows quickly, in contrast to the slow growth of a tree, it is clearly a mistake to think that Christ alluded to a real *tree*, found on the shores of the Dead Sea, standing from ten to twenty feet high, and called the mustard tree by the Arabs. The common mustard, indeed, grows very tall in the rich soil of the Jordan

[1] Buxtorff's Lex. 822.
[2] Koran, Sura 21.
[3] Matt. xiii. 31.

valley, but even on the plain of Acre it is often as high as the head of a man on horseback. That the Gospel calls it a tree as well as a plant, is only a way of expressing its special height in comparison with other shrubs.

The parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard is another in the series of picture lessons from country life, given by our Lord.[1] It brings before us the sight, still familiar in the East, of a gathering of peasants in the market-place, before sunrise, waiting to be hired for the day, to work in the neighbouring fields or vineyards. The day begins and ends early with Orientals; all being still for the night very soon after sunset, while every one is astir with the birds; the labourer going out to his daily work, or to the hiring place, while the shadows of the morning twilight still rest on the landscape. Spade in hand, or with their rude plough on their shoulders, those who have no ground of their own are very thankful when some one seeks their help in his vineyard or garden. In Palestine, however, the day is later in beginning than with us, though at the Passover time the sun rises about half-past four, and sets about six,[2] making a long stretch of toil for those hired at the opening morning, and leaving no room for wonder that they should feel aggrieved at others, who had been at work only one hour, being paid as much for it as they received for their weary labour from sunrise to sunset. Hired labourers of all kinds were as common in Christ's day as they are now, for we read of harvestmen,[3] ploughmen, shepherds,[4] boatmen,[5] gatekeepers,[6] and porters;[7] and the peasants standing in the market-place were no doubt ready

[1] Matt. xx. 1–16.
[2] Gresswell's *Harmon. Evan.*, 294, 356.
[3] Matt. ix. 38.
[4] Luke xvii. 7.
[5] Mark i. 20.
[6] Mark xiii. 34.
[7] Mark xi. 16.

for any kind of rough work. Those in the parable received a denarius a day; equal, nominally, to eightpence-halfpenny of English money, but worth far more in purchasing value in that age, while, in addition, many employers, like the father of the Prodigal, added a gift of the day's food.[1] The work in a vineyard in Palestine is, in some respects, peculiar to the country. At Hebron, for instance, though it is the finest vine-growing district in the land, the stones are so countless everywhere, that the task of picking them off the ground, after any rain-storm, is by no means a light one. The walls built of them are many feet broad, but this has not exhausted the supply, for the narrow lanes which serve for roads are heaped, one knows not how deep, with them, and there seem as many as ever on the soil. Stones, however, do not hinder fertility, as might be feared. At Nazareth, the grounds of the new hospital, on the top of the hill, were nothing but a wilderness of chips of limestone, created in levelling the surface. No mason's yard could have been thicker with them, yet they were planted with vines and fruit trees, at regular intervals, all over. "What can you expect from such a quarry as this?" was my natural question, but I received the laughing answer: "Come back in a year, and you will see crops that will surprise you." At Baalbek, also, I was walking over the low hill above the cut into the rock, where a huge stone, weighing about fifteen hundred tons, intended for the great temple buildings near, has lain, waiting removal, for now over seventeen hundred years, and was astonished to find vines sticking up, through the beds of shingle which lay deep below my feet, as if I had been on the shore at Brighton. But on expressing my wonder at such a vine-

[1] Luke xv. 17.

yard, I was assured that the roots struck down into good soil beneath, and that the stones rather helped the vintage than injured it, by their retaining moisture and creating special warmth. There is much to be done, however, besides removing the surface stones. The mattock is kept busy breaking up the soil, and the bill-hook has its work in cutting down thistles and thorns; and these have to be pulled to a safe corner and burned, if not wanted at home for fuel. Then there is the pruning; the propping with stakes; the repairing the fence or hedge, and a thousand things besides. Vines, in Palestine, are cut back to two or three shoots, which are trained along rods laid only a little above the ground; the stem being bent down towards them, and the rods serving to keep the runners off the actual soil. In the hot south, where such rods could not be had, a substitute was anciently found, in low mounds of stones, which may still be seen in many wadys below Hebron; the district from which the spies brought to Moses the wonderful clusters of Eshcol. The mention in the parable of a "steward," or managing agent for the owner of the vineyard, speaks of landlords, in a large sense, as common in our Lord's day; such as the young man, who left Him with a heavy heart, on being told to sell his "great possessions," and give their value to the poor. Chuza, the "steward," or manager of the private affairs of Herod Antipas, is mentioned by St. Luke,[1] as the husband of one of the rich ladies who ministered to Christ of their substance; a pleasing glimpse of one of the few amenities of life that cheered the poverty of the Redeemer. That the labourers hired in the early morning should speak of their having "borne the burden of the day, and the scorching

[1] Luke viii. 3.

heat," is a striking detail of local colouring; for the heat intended is that of the sirocco, which blows from the east and south-east, over waterless regions of intense heat, and is insufferably oppressive. Drying up the moisture of vegetation, and wanting ozone, it withers all verdure and exhausts and unnerves the physical powers, so that to work while it continues is unspeakably toilsome. It comes, from time to time, at all seasons, but, most frequently, in the second half of May, the end of October, and the first part of November, before the early rains. At times softly, as I have felt it, at times in wild storm, it often blows over the mountains of Palestine for days together, driving up the thermometer even in the shade, to 125 or 135 degrees Fahrenheit; a furnace glow that makes the least exertion almost impossible. In sirocco storms, indeed, work is out of the question, but the labourer keeps at his task when it blows only softly. Those in the vineyard had done so, and could not forget how it had aggravated their day's weariness. To have introduced such a touch of everyday experience, was possible only to one who, like Christ, was a native of Palestine, for the words "scorching heat" are, literally, "burning wind;" that is, the sirocco. The picture of men willing to work, but standing idle all through the day, because no one had hired them, speaks of widespread misery among the poor in those times, and makes it more easy to realize the deep sympathy with which Christ yearns over the lost and helpless condition of the masses, who so eagerly followed one shewing such a brave and generous enthusiasm for them.

The ancient system of family holdings, inalienable from generation to generation, had been long forgotten; great estates made one man wealthy, and the peasants mere

helots and proletarians, like the wretched peasantry of to-day, whose poverty is almost beyond words. Yet the labourers in the parable were free men, waiting to be hired; not slaves, as so many are in the Gospels. The population was divided, by the religionists of the ages after the Exile, into two classes, the Chaberim, or recognized "congregation of Israel," and "the people of the land," who were not regarded as members of the true Israelites, because they could not, from their station in life, devote themselves to the strict observance of the Law, including the "traditions of the elders," that is, of all the past generations of rabbis. The Chaberim and the Pharisees were practically the same, and the social degradation of the mass of the people, who were not of their number, may be judged from the relations of this narrow class to them. The multitudes of the common people, such as the labourers in the parable, were, in fact, despised and loathed as a contamination to persons so strictly "righteous." As the Israelite shrank nervously from any close intercourse with a heathen, thinking it defiling, the Pharisee shunned with horror any relations that could be avoided, with one who did not belong to his order, because such a person was, in his view, an unclean boor; one of the abhorred "people of the land." The poor man's clothes were "unclean;" and the strict Israelite would not be his guest, or receive him as guest in his usual clothing. If the wife of such a precisian left the wife of a poor man grinding in her house, the house was unclean if the mill-stones were no longer going when she returned; but if they were still going, it was unclean as far round the mill-stones as the arm of the poor woman reached. A precisian would not sell "the people of the land" either moist or dried fruit, and would

buy no moist fruit from them. Nor would he sell them olives. In fact, the zealot for the Law, holding himself the only true Jew, stood scornfully apart from every one, except his fellow zealots; whether publicans, "sinners," or only the humbler classes; they were not good enough for a class who aspired to be, or become, blamelessly righteous as concerned the Law, and were rigorously avoided in all the intercourse of daily life. With the poor labourers, waiting to be hired, these superfine saints would have nothing whatever to do, and they must often have been shocked at the impropriety of a professed rabbi, like Jesus, mingling with such "common people," because they "heard Him gladly," or going into the houses of "publicans and sinners" and eating and drinking with them.[1]

The parable of the Wicked Husbandmen is drawn, like that of the Labourers, from the vineyard, and thus shews, incidentally, how great a part the vine played in the country life of our Lord's time. For had He lived now, He might have spoken of the olive or the fig, but could hardly have discoursed so much about the vineyard, which is very rare except round Hebron and the German colony on the plain of Sharon, near Joppa. In either place, vineyards offer a strange disillusion to those who think of them in connection with spreading branches and long arcades of green and purple clusters. The householder in the parable,[2] as has been said, would plant his vines, in wide rows, bending back the stem as it shot up, till it rested, when cut off four or five feet from the root, on a forked stick, to keep the shoots off the ground; the vines thus looking only like so many dirty sticks, with a few streamers of green from

[1] Matt. ix. 11; Mark ii. 15-22; xii. 37; Luke v. 29, 30.
[2] Matt. xxi. 33-46; Mark xii. 1-12; Luke xx. 9-19.

the top. I have already spoken of the details of a modern Palestine vineyard, but the parallel is so interesting between the particulars introduced in each of what I might call the vineyard parables, that one may risk a little repetition. The "hedge," set round his vineyard by the householder, would be of stones picked off its surface, if it were at Hebron; a high mud wall, if it were at Gaza; or a close "hedge" of prickly pear, a huge cactus with countless spines from each clumsy, hand-like, fleshy leaf, if it were in a part where loose stones or clay soil were scarce. Fences of one kind or another round vineyards are meant, where the servants were sent out to the highways, that is, the ordinary tracks which pass for roads, and to "*the hedges*," for these wind in a labyrinth of narrow lanes, in vine-growing districts.[1] Repetitions of the "tower" he built in it, may be seen in vineyards of to-day; stone houses, generally small in size, but permitting a look-out on all sides, by "the keepers of the vineyard,"[2] and there must also have been some kind of shelter for the "husbandmen," as a vineyard is often far from any village. The wine-press he hewed out in the shelf of limestone, cropping up at the back of his vineyard, must have been like an ancient one I saw in a vineyard at Hebron. There were two troughs, one above the other, both strongly cemented on the bottom and sides; the upper one being for the grapes which were cast into it, and then trodden by the feet; the juice flowing into the one below; just as at this day. The troughs, however, were small; measuring only about four feet in length, by two in breadth, while they were quite shallow; so that the yield for which they were designed could not have been large.

[1] Luke xiv. 23. [2] Cant. i. 6.

The most common mode of letting vineyards or other rural properties was, and still is, that in use in Italy, and largely in the newer parts of America; the payment of a fixed proportion of the harvest to the owner. In the para-

TREADING THE WINE-PRESS (EGYPTIAN).

ble, however, the proprietor sends, according to St. Matthew, for his fruits, that is, his rent; not for his share of the produce, which would need to be converted into money, to be of any use to him in the "other country" to which he had gone "for a long time." In the parable, a curious light is thrown on country life in those far-away days, by the statement that the vineyard was let to an associated body of peasants, or, as we might call them, labourers, so that co-operation is by no means a new idea. Some of these would act as "keepers" or watchmen, for orchard thieves are an old class of rascals. Yet Shulammith,[1] in Canticles, was a keeper of her brother's vineyard, though it was a hard employment for her; the fierce summer sun burning

[1] Cant. i. 6. Shulammith is the word translated in Cant. vi. 13, "the Shulamite." It may be a proper name, or may mean "of Shulem."

her comely face black. "Towers" are a luxury not at all frequent for those thus on guard; a rude hut, covered over with boughs, being generally thought good enough for them. Job could, hence, compare the hopes of the wicked, in their instability, to his building his house "as a moth, and as a booth that the keeper maketh," and the prophet likens Jerusalem as war left it, to a "booth in a vineyard."[1] The watchman who guarded my tent at Samaria carried a heavy club, and the keeper of the vineyard is similarly armed. My protector seemed as if he would have fought hard for me, and "keepers" are generally as faithful; often risking their lives to protect what is intrusted to them. It is a hard duty, however, for it needs wakefulness through the night: a weary vigil to which the Psalmist alludes when he speaks of "his soul looking out for the Lord, more than watchmen (or keepers) for the morning."[2] My "keeper" shouted out, from time to time, to frighten off thieves by shewing he was awake, a practice ascribed, in a figurative way, to the Chaldæans, by the prophet, when he speaks of them, while encamped round Jerusalem, as calling out to each other like the keepers of a field.[3] It is striking, when we remember these traits of the East, to call to mind the references to them in Scripture. "Am I my brother's keeper?" asks Cain. And then, there are such sweet words as "The Lord keepeth all the bones of the righteous;" "He keepeth the souls of His saints;" "He keepeth the simple;" but, unlike human keepers, "He that keepeth Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps."[4]

The wall being carefully built of the loose surface stones, and sheep, cattle, and goats being thus shut out; the

[1] Job xxvii. 18; Isa. i. 8, Heb.
[2] Ps. cxxx. 6.
[3] Jer. iv. 16.
[4] Ps. xxxiv. 20; xcvii. 10; cxvi. 6; cxxi. 4.

tower, the press, and all else being made right, the householder might feel confident that no more was needed. At the proper time, therefore, he sent for his rent; some of his slaves being despatched to receive it for him. It might seem, from more than one being spoken of by St. Matthew, that the rent was to be paid in kind; but St. Mark and St. Luke speak of only a single slave as sent, so that the payment may have been in money. A more important point is, that he is represented as sending a second body more numerous than the first, implying that large numbers of slaves were held by single owners in our Lord's day, in Palestine. The insecurity of life is reflected by the fierce lawlessness of the peasants who had possession of the vineyard; for that must have been a wild time, of which it could be said, that they beat, stabbed, or stoned, both bands; ending by killing even the householder's son. Nor is it a less vivid indication of general social demoralization to find the injured owner represented as coming and destroying the criminals, without any reference of the matter to a court of law. The parable must be true to possibilities, else it would have failed to impress, and hence may be accepted, as implying a very unsettled state of society in Palestine, in those days, at least in districts away from Roman posts. The hideous misery entailed on the whole land by the long civil wars of local pretenders, and, still more, by the awful struggles of the rival claimants to the throne of the world, had brought over wide regions, not in Palestine alone, but in every province of the all-embracing Roman Empire, a dissolution of society, and the destruction of once flourishing communities, which made it the great task of the peaceful age of Augustus, to rebuild ruined cities; to bring back to cultivation provinces once

filled with a thriving population, and rich in all rural industries; to repress and extirpate the lawlessness following in the train of such prolonged social convulsions, and to restore order and the sanctities of a secure public and private life. Over Palestine and Western Asia, including Asia Minor, there was, in fact, a state of things to redress, which, in a measure, anticipated that of the civilized world at large, in the fifth century, when the safest retreat of robbers, or the most lonely haunt of the solitary monk, fleeing from the evils of the world, was in the ruins of what had not long before been a rich and populous city. Or, if we seek a parallel in modern history, there was such a state of things as remained, over central Europe, after the close of the Thirty Years' War; the scars and ruin of which are not even yet effaced, after nearly two hundred and fifty years. As to the number of slaves in the towns and country, in our Lord's day, the story of one incident that marked the insurrection of the north after the death of Herod the Great, throws a vivid light on the sources from which they were obtained. Sepphoris, then the chief town of Galilee, having shewn itself specially active in the revolt, was punished by Varus—then governor-general of Syria, but immortalized, a few years later, in A.D. 9, when Jesus was a boy of twelve or thirteen, by being the general under whom the legions of Rome were annihilated by the confederate Germans, in the Black Forest. He sent an army division against it, with orders to burn it to the ground, and sell off all the inhabitants as slaves, which was carried out with bitter completeness,[1] as the child Christ would often hear, at Nazareth, which was only a few miles off, across the round gray hills. That the "hus-

[1] Jos., *Ant.*, xvii. 10, 9; *Bell. Jud.*, ii. 5, 1.

bandmen" in the parable, and the "householder" himself, shewed so rough a savagery, need not surprise us, when we remember, that the heaving waves of such a time of wild confusion were still far from having settled to a calm.

The parable of the Seed growing Secretly[1] is striking, from the illustration it gives of the instinctive delight of Christ in the analogies between the natural and the spiritual worlds. Paraphrased in few words, it is meant to impress on His hearers, how, as a man after he has sown the seed for his future harvest, passively waits for its germinating, springing, and ripening, by a process working secretly and mysteriously, he neither sees nor knows how, and only comes to reap the harvest when it has thus been ripened ; so, when the Messiah casts the seed of His kingdom into "an honest and good heart,"[2] He leaves its quickening into spiritual life, and its ever-advancing developments, to the secret moral activities of the "good soil" in which He has thus sown it, till the great harvest day, when His angels will gather the righteous—that is, those who have yielded "the full corn in the ear"—into His Messianic Kingdom. Thus Christ teaches us to find a commentary on the moral government of God, in the processes of His government of nature ; turning the wide heavens and earth into a great chamber of meditation, rich, amidst much else, in its illustrations of His action on the human soul. I omit all that might be said of the influences that aid the springing of the seed, and its advance to the blade, the ear, and the full corn in the ear, and confine myself to the literal parallel required by the parable, while by no means intending to shut out expansions of the strict analogy suggested by the sacred words.

[1] Mark iv. 26, 29. [2] Luke xii. 15.

The parable of the Rich Fool brings us into the midst of the rural life of Christ's day, in another aspect.[1] It was suggested by an instance of the covetousness which is so characteristic among Orientals. There are no fewer than eight words in the New Testament bearing on this vice, and it is noticed as many as twenty-five times among the prevalent tendencies of the day. Every one, moreover, will remember how constantly the unjust man, the judge who takes bribes, the violent man who seizes the property of the poor or weak, and others of the same class, are introduced in the Psalms and the Prophets. That the leading religionists of Christ's time—the Pharisees—are branded by Him as hatefully covetous, "making clean the outside," while, within, "they were full of extortion and excess;" "devouring widows' houses" under cover of "long prayers,"[2] speaks volumes for the tone of the less sanctimonious body of the community, who would, doubtless, improve on the example of these lights of the Church, for their own advantage. But, indeed, the fact that the very word "Jew" has become a recognized equivalent in our language, for over-reaching, in the form of the verb "to Jew," and that the race has, in all ages, been associated with greed and unfairness in the pursuit of gain, as one of its marked characteristics, throws into a strong light the lesson of the parable of the poor Rich Fool.

That one of the crowd round our Lord should have thought of making a request to Him that He should interfere in a family dispute about a bit of land, when the laws of inheritance decided such matters with minute exactness, was either a greedy man's attempt to avoid a trifling legal expense; or his sordid nature, insensible to religious im-

[1] Luke xii. 13-21. [2] Matt. xxiii. 14, 25; Luke xvi. 14, etc.

pressions, could think only of money, even while Christ was speaking of the things of God, and fancied Him as interested in such matters as he himself was. He assumed that Jesus, like other rabbis, would delight to be asked for His opinion on any details of everyday life, for they felt proud at being thought practical men of business and shrewd lawyers, in the worldly sense, as well as skilled in theology. Turning to the crowd, after curtly resenting the application, Christ reminded them that the continuance of life did not depend on our having more than we needed, but on the good pleasure of God, and that covetousness was, hence, as foolish as it was criminal. A well-to-do man in the East, even now, helps, like the rich Boaz, in his own fields, so that we need not think of the "fool" in the parable, as one who was idly enjoying the fruit of other men's labours. He must have had a wide estate, for he had more than one barn, and speaks of his corn and other agricultural wealth, as if it would fill several. I saw large barns at Lake Huleh, and on the way to Damascus, and there was a large one at the upper end of the Lake of Galilee, on the east side of the Jordan. But the barns of the foolish rich man may have been ruder than the best kind one sees to-day; perhaps like those met in rich peasants' "compounds," in Palestine, even now, where cabins are built, side by side, along the four walls of a large enclosure, each with its own entrance; the long continuous roof, formed of hard-stamped earth, resting on rough stems of trees, as rafters; each cabin having a great corn bin of mud, built up against its walls; the whole forming, perhaps, such an establishment as that of the peasant king Ishbosheth, the son of Saul.[1] Grain is sometimes stored in strange places, however, in the East; for it is not

[1] 2 Sam. iv. 5.

an unknown thing to dig out a hole for quantities of it, in the old, dry, hill-like, village dust-heap, and there is no end, over the country, of subterranean grain pits, carefully cemented and of great size, with a very small mouth, which opens to a bottle-shaped interior. The poor man has no thought except of himself; none, of his obligations to the Author of his prosperity, by discharging which, in acts of love to those around, he might have made friends of "the mammon of unrighteousness," that, when it should fail, "they might receive him into the eternal tabernacles."[1] But we should err, if we painted the selfish and animal pleasures to which he looked forward, by our Western ideas of the indulgence of the table. As a rule, Orientals live very temperately and plainly; the Gospels, for example, mentioning only such modest articles of food as wheat and barley bread; figs; honey; growing corn, rubbed in the hand; fish; eggs; grapes; milk; and the luxury of a kid, when there was a "feast," or, on very special occasions, the extraordinary expenditure of a fatted calf. Living, among the poor, is incredibly wretched, for I have seen peasants, in Egypt, pulling the grass for the sheep, from the rude waggon, and eating it, and I often noticed poor women in Palestine, groping over the scanty green in a yard, or at the roadside, for materials to help their family meal. A few dry figs, and, possibly, a drink of sour milk, with a flat round "bannock" of barley bread, is, to most, a sumptuous dinner. At one place, a village feast drew together the men of the little community, to see us, and to join in the supper, if asked. When it came, after sunset, two rows of guests sat down on the floor; we, with our legs in Western fashion, straight out; the peasants, with theirs

[1] Luke xvi. 9.

crossed. There were two dishes; the one, of wheat-meal, strongly spiced; the other, full of chopped leeks and onions. Our spoons were thin flat disks of bread, just baked; the spoons themselves being eaten, with what they held. Several dipped into the same dish, as our Lord did, with Judas, at the Last Supper, when Christ said, "He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same will betray me."[1] But a more pretentious "feast" at Hebron, will help us better to imagine what the rich foolish man esteemed, "eating and drinking, and making merry." A huge round tray of tinned copper, set on a low wooden stool, served for table, and to support a smaller, but still large tray, set in the middle of it, heaped up with a mound of boiled rice, soaked with melted butter, and abounding, all through, with small bits of meat. Besides this, which was the main preparation, there were smaller dishes of meat and vegetables. The guests squatted on the piece of carpet in the middle of the room; their knees drawn up to their bodies, and as at humbler entertainments, most of these dipped their hands into the dish for what they wanted, though a few used wooden spoons, and plates of tinned copper, which, however, were not known in the days of Christ. When any one had finished, he rose, and retired to the next room, to have his hands washed by water being poured over them; his empty place at the table being immediately filled up by some one still dinnerless. This was the entertainment provided for three governors and other dignitaries, so that it may not have been unlike the "feasts" to which the poor creature in the parable looked forward so fondly. He may, indeed, have had pieces of stewed chickens mixed with the wheat meal,

[1] Matt. xxvi. 23.

instead of pieces of a kid or lamb, and there may have been stews of beans, or of cracked wheat, and thick soup may have been poured over the contents of the great dish in the centre, but these are only trifling variations from a menu always substantially the same. Wine is not used in Palestine now, except among non-Mohammedans, but it would figure in the entertainments of our Lord's age, and perhaps the foolish host, like Nabal, looked forward to making only too free a use of it.[1]

[1] 1 Sam. xxiii.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ALLUSIONS IN THE PARABLES—(*continued*).

THE parable of the Barren Fig Tree[1] reminds us of the practice of Orientals, to let fruit trees grow wherever they can get soil enough; olives, figs, and other trees, being thus constantly found in patches of ploughed land, in vineyards, and rising from little pockets of earth on the bare hill-sides. The "vine-dresser" brings to my mind a gardener in an orchard at Gaza, in which the fruit trees stood wide apart, and the space between was sown with all kinds of vegetables; mainly those familiar to ourselves, for the market gardener of Palestine raises much the same variety of esculents as his brother in England. He was middle aged, and very thin, from constant exposure in the hot sun. An old fez—the common Turkish red felt head-covering—was transformed into a homely turban, by a coloured handkerchief wound round it, to protect the poor brain from the heat. His arms and legs were bare; his person covered by a shirt, over which was a blue cotton blouse. At his side hung an iron chain, to which a steel for striking fire, and a knife for pruning, were attached; his girdle, a strip of common leather, like that of John the Baptist, kept his thin clothing from blowing about, or coming in his way, and made all above it a great pocket; the "bosom," as I have often said, into which the "full

[1] Luke xiii. 6-9.

measure" given to those who themselves give, is poured.[1] It served also to let the chain hang at his side. His garden, which I visited on the second of March, had some fig trees in it, just as in the vineyard of the parable; some of them breaking into leaf; others, not yet waked from their winter sleep. Onions abounded, in large beds, from which they rose a foot high; lettuce was equally plentiful, as it may well be, since, with bread, it is often the only food of the poor. Between the rows of it were tomatoes, which were set, also, between the rows of vines planted at one part of the garden, and now shewing their tender young leaves. Beds of marrows spread out every here and there; beans were about nine inches high; garlic a little shorter; parsley ornamented one corner; a patch of tobacco was just peeping above the ground; and the pink flowers of some pomegranates were looking out from the thin twigs of trees on the far side. All this vigorous and beautiful vegetation flourished without watering; the early and latter rains, and the night winds from the sea, supplying the moisture needed; as they do on the plain of Sharon, and, indeed, over most of Palestine, though the orange groves and other orchards are, in some cases, watered by artificial streams, raised by waterwheels, as at Joppa. A very curious parallel to the general scope of the parable, occurs in an Arabic treatise on natural history, quoted by Rosenmüller. A palm tree, it is said, being barren, its owner went with a friend to hew it down, as worthless. But when the axe was already uplifted, the friend interceded for it. "Pray, spare it; it will certainly yield fruit this year." The owner, however, tired of waiting for its bearing, would hardly let it be spared. "It cannot be otherwise,"

[1] Luke vi. 38.

said he, striking the tree thrice with the axe, yet only with the back of it. But the friend could not suffer it to fall, without one more effort to save it. "I beseech thee, do not cut it down," cried he; "you will certainly have fruit from it this year; have patience with it, and if it bear no fruit, then hew it down." Substitute a fig tree for the palm, and our Lord's words are reproduced! In both cases, the everyday incident of the fruit grove is used as a parable, the lesson of which speaks for itself.

The parable of the Lost Sheep [1] has been already noticed, but one or two points are worthy of a few more words. As we see in the case of Jacob, an Eastern shepherd [2] is bound to make good any losses from the flock, whether torn by wild beasts, or stolen by day or by night, but he is willing to bear this risk, from his wages depending, materially, on the increase and vigour of his charge; his payment being made by a share of the young lambs, or of the wool, or of both. For his own sake, therefore, apart from the sympathy between him and the creatures which are his constant and only companions, he is proverbially devoted to his duties, and brave in the discharge of them. If a sheep has strayed, he will wander hour after hour, seeking it in every waterless hollow, or dark and wild ravine; knowing that it must perish from want, or from the wolves, if he do not find it. When he has found it, therefore, he rejoices with all the passionate demonstrativeness of an Oriental, as he lays the poor wearied and half-dead creature on his shoulders, and carries it home to the fold. Not that all shepherds are thus ideally true, for no doubt there are always some like those of whom the prophets tell us, that they "ate the milk and butter, and clothed themselves

[1] Matt. xviii. 12-14; Luke iii. 1-7.

[2] Gen. xxxi. 39.

with the wool, and killed the fatted sheep; but did not feed the flock, or strengthen the weak, or heal the sick, or bind up the injured, or lead back the strayed, or seek the lost."[1] The parallel between the devotion of the good shepherd, and the heavenly love of the Master, and his faithful under-shepherds, seeking and saving poor wandering souls, is touchingly perfect; in the picture drawn by the prophets, the worthless shepherd is an ideal type of those who have the name of "pastors," but do it dishonour. In St. Luke's version of the parable, we learn that it was spoken by our Lord, when "all the publicans were drawing near to Him, to hear Him," and "both the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." It throws light on the idea connected with such an opprobrious name as "sinners," to find St. Paul contrasting those who are "Jews by nature," with "sinners of the Gentiles;" their sinfulness consisting, evidently, in such a connection, in their not keeping "the Law," through being heathen, and not in any moral depravity, for the Gentiles of whom he speaks were Christian converts.[2] When, moreover, Christ speaks of His not having come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance, He must mean by righteous, those who reckoned themselves so, from their punctilious observance of all formal legal requirements, and were inaccessible to the contrition possible to less self-satisfied natures. Of course, the expression includes sinners in a moral sense, but those who thronged to the preaching of Jesus need not be fancied as, specially, the dregs of the population, but, to a large extent, only members of the poorer classes, whose occupations and poverty made strict observance of the multitudinous re-

[1] Ezek. xxxiv. 3, 4; Zech. xi. 16. [2] Gal. ii. 15.

quirements of the rabbis impossible. The "publicans," as I have said, were the custom-house officers and excisemen stationed at frontiers, at gates of cities, on rivers, and at smaller or larger ports and havens. As a class, they were everywhere hated, for their rudeness, frauds, vexations, and oppressions. Cicero speaks of them[1] as "ransacking, like very thieves, the houses, shops, and ships, of all; snaring in their nets, by iniquitous actions at law, men carrying out business; frightening traders from coming ashore from ships, and keeping back those wishing to sail." Jews who followed this calling were hated by their fellows with special intensity, as renegades and traitors, who had sold themselves, for gain, to the national enemy; collecting for the heathen treasury of Rome taxes which, if raised at all, were the right of the true King of Israel, Jehovah. The alms of a publican were refused, no one could change money at their booths; they could not give witness in a court of law; and in every other way they were treated as heathen,[2] or even worse. By "wilderness," as used for the part in which the ninety and nine sheep were left, it is not intended that we should understand a desolate region, for the flock would, of course, have starved in such a place, but the unenclosed downs and hill-slopes, which are still open to shepherds, all over Palestine, and are "wilderness" only in the old sense of the word, from their being uncultivated. South and east of Bethlehem, for example, the whole country is free to any flock, and is fed over by shepherds wherever there is a trace of pasture; the flocks often wandering to long distances, where the shepherds have to lie out with them all night, if there be no cave near, to offer a shelter. In such districts a poor sheep may easily

[1] *In Vatin.*, 5. [2] Luke xix. 9.

separate from its fellows, in the constant moving from glen to glen, and, once lost, can only be found, by weary toil over bare hills and through stony ravines, if ever found at all.

The parable of the Prodigal Son has many allusions to the life amidst which Christ moved. The younger of two sons inherited, among the Hebrews, only half as much as the first born, and it was this amount for which the "Prodigal" asked his kind father, in anticipation of the time when it would rightfully have fallen to him, at his father's death.[1] The elder son, also, we are told, had his larger share assigned him, when his brother's request was granted, but the father wisely retained his claim on it till death, and continued the son in his service. The estate, however, remained in the father's possession, for it was only the "living," that is, only his accumulated money, not his landed property, that was given up. He did not, therefore, strip himself of the means of support, on the same scale as in the past, which would have been out of the question, but made over part of his fortune, to the son he so fondly loved. Eager to be his own master, away from his father's eye, the Prodigal turns whatever he could not take with him, into money, and thus "gathers all together;" then sets out to a distant part of the country, where he could indulge his follies as he pleased; no one at home knowing. Failure of the usual rains brings famine on Eastern countries, with a frequency unknown in more humid lands, as may be seen in the fact, that this calamity is mentioned more than fifty times in the Old Testament, though not of as many different famines, and twelve times in the New Testament. There had been a terrible famine in Judæa in the thirteenth

[1] Deut. xxi. 17.

and fourteenth years of Herod, that is, about twenty years before the birth of Christ, and the record of the awful details of that time would linger in the minds of the next generation, lending vividness to their realization of what the Prodigal must have suffered. The preservation of the nation had, in fact, been due only to the splendid and wise energy of Herod, in battling with it by importing grain from abroad.[1] On the plain of Sharon, near Joppa, beside a very poor village, I saw the first carob tree I had met; the tree from which the thoughtless, sin-stricken wanderer of the parable was fain to satisfy his hunger in the weary famine days, as he drove his filthy herd of swine to it, to eat the pods lying below it. He could fall no lower, as a Jew, for his master must have been a heathen, and to take service with a heathen was the bitterest degradation, while swine were, themselves, an abomination to his race. The carob rises to a height of from twenty to thirty feet, looking like a huge apple tree, and attracting the eye, at once, by its abundant foliage of dark glossy evergreen leaves; in marked contrast to the bare landscape in which it stands, for trees are very scarce in Palestine. February sees it gorgeous with countless purple-red, hanging blossoms, which are replaced, in April and May, by huge crops of pods from six to ten inches long, flat, brown, narrow, and bent like a horn; the Greeks calling it, from this, "keration," "the little horn." These pods, which are sweet while still unripe, are gathered in great quantities by the peasantry, who sell them to the traders in the towns, where they are used both for home consumption and for exportation. Immense quantities come to England, for horse fodder, but I often saw them in the bazaars in Palestine and

[1] Jos., *Ant.*, xv. 9, 1.

Syria, exposed as food for the very poor. Yet even in the East they are mainly used as in the parable, for fattening pigs, where there are Christians who keep the hated brute, or for horses and cattle. Horace makes the starving poet live on carob husks and brown bread.[1] Juvenal, who lived in the generation after Christ, makes his ruined spendthrift, who has wasted his patrimony on riotous living, like our Prodigal, glad to satisfy himself, like him, on carob pods and coarse porridge.[2] So that contemporary allusions shew, what the parable seeks to imply, that these pods were the poorest food of the otherwise utterly destitute. Swine were used, in large numbers, by the Roman population of the towns east of the Lake of Galilee, for food and sacrifices, which, in many cases, demanded boars or pigs. The old Italians, indeed, attributed a special atoning virtue to such offerings, and their ideas still swayed the Roman world. Among the Jews, on the other hand, the pig was the symbol of uncleanness, and was never kept by them; which is not exactly the rule with all modern Jews, for one told me recently, to my great amusement and to his own, that he was a pork merchant! "But," said he, "I don't eat it, and I told the rulers of the synagogue, that if they made any fuss about my trade, I would clear off and they would lose my contributions, and they have said nothing since." The hatred of swine flesh, however, dates, perhaps, with the Jews, from their Egyptian life, for so hated was everything connected with the pig on the Nile, where it was the type of Typhon, the principle of evil, that a swineherd was not allowed to enter any temple, and was held in the lowest contempt; a feeling which, we may believe, passed to the Jews, and, even apart from sanitary consider-

[1] Hor., *Ep.*, ii. 1. [2] Juv., *Sat.*, xi. 58.

ations, may have led to the prohibition of the use of pork in any shape.[1] It must, hence, have been a striking aggravation of the proud contempt with which the Jew regarded even the haughty Roman, to see him sacrificing a sow, at the opening of the yearly service of perambulating fields or towns, to secure a blessing on them—as is still done in Italy, at least near towns—or in the presence of a corpse, to purify the house of death. The degradation felt by the Prodigal, as a Jew, when tending his loathed charge, may therefore be imagined.

In the parable of the Unjust Steward, that officer is not to be supposed a mere bailiff, for the word used of him implies that he was over everything belonging to his lord; his money as well as his land, so that he was able to make what arrangements with tenants or debtors he liked, without fear of detection. His proposals of fraud on the part of those owing his master, shew that rent was, at least in part, paid in kind; oil and wheat, the chief money-making produce of land, being specially named. He was thus much the same as the English "land agent" of a nobleman, or the Scotch "factor," which involves the existence, in our Lord's day, in Palestine, of very rich men, holding large tracts of land; a state of things implying, in such a narrow territory, and in a community without manufactures or mining industries, a proletariat profoundly wretched, such as is revealed in Christ's relations with the masses of His fellow-countrymen. The tenants, however, must have been substantial men, if, indeed, all their profit did not pass out of their hands, to those of the landlord, as was the way a generation ago in Norfolk and other English counties, according to Dr. Jessopp.[2] The debts

[1] Lev. xi. 7; Deut. xiv. 8.

[2] *Arcady.*

they owed were heavy; one having to pay a hundred baths of oil, or about eight hundred and fifty gallons, and another, eleven hundred and fifty bushels of wheat; but if a fair living remained after paying this rent, it is certain that very little of it got the length of the poor labourer.

The extent to which education had spread in Christ's day, is incidentally disclosed, by the mention of written notes of obligation as having been given by both tenants mentioned, and by their being assumed able to write out new notes, to replace the old ones. We find, moreover, mention of Zacharias, our Lord, John, the apostles, and "the brethren," writing,[1] and of "writings of divorcement," writing-tablets, and many other proofs that, even in the humble class from which the apostles were drawn, writing, and of course reading, were wonderfully common. Every pure Jew, in fact, whose parents were desirous that he should keep the Law, learned to read and write, to secure his being able to study it in after life. The Law was, indeed, perhaps with the "Prophets," the one book of the nation. Every one knew it off by heart, but disdained to know any book besides.

In the parable of the Draw-Net—the only one taken from the calling of His apostles—Christ compares the "kingdom of heaven" to a seine or draw-net, which was of great length, sweeping into it the fish of a very wide space, and used to gather harvests from every part of the lake. In Christ's day, the number of boats afloat was immense, for, even a generation later, they dared to meet a fleet built by Vespasian, and were only routed after a fierce battle. A dense population secured a great market; large quantities being sent, dried, to other countries, while Jerusalem, and

[1] Luke i. 63; John viii. 6; xxi. 24; Acts xv. 23; xviii. 27.

the various towns thickly strewn over the land, were great consumers of fish. At this time, there are only one or two boats on the waters, and the fish have increased to such an extent, that a pistol shot fired into a shoal has been known to kill a number. Indeed, the shoals are so great, that the rush of their back fins on the surface is not seldom like the roughness of a heavy rain. The boat in which I sailed on the lake, may have been like those used by Christ and the apostles, and I may therefore describe it more fully. Sharp at both ends, it was perhaps of from six to eight tons burden, with a mast fourteen or fifteen feet high, raking forward. A huge sail, tied along a thin yard, which slanted up so sharply that one corner rose high above the mast, was raised or lowered by a rope passed through a pulley, at the mast-head. At the stern there was a deck of about five feet; an "upper seat" on which our mats were spread; the hollow below it forming a stowing place for the nets. The crew, four in number, dressed partly in European costume, but all barelegged and barefooted, were fine big men, and rowed the boat with great skill; the day being quite calm. It was very delightful to glide over the waters sacred to the memory of the Redeemer, but there was one drawback—the overpowering smell of fish, which made me quite sick. Was it thus, I wondered, with the boats in which the Master sailed to and fro? It must have been, for all fishing boats are alike malodorous.

The parable of the Leaven[1] shews us Christ noticing the lowly offices of house-mothers, in making ready to bake their daily supply of bread for their families. We do not know how the Jews prepared their leaven, but they used it as early as the days of Moses.[2] The three measures of meal

[1] Matt. xiii. 33; Luke xiii. 20, 21. [2] Exod. xii. 15.

to be leavened, were equal to about four pecks and a half, or more than a bushel; a large quantity for one household baking, and, hence, probably hinting at preparations for some humble feast. Women have not only the task of making the bread in the East, but of grinding the wheat or barley needed for it; a very tiring labour, at which I was heartily glad to see a man busy, one day, on the ground before his house, at Joppa. The small millstones used are part of every establishment, and consist of two stones, eighteen inches or two feet across; the upper one with a hole in the centre, to receive the grain, and slightly concave on the under side, to fit a similar convexity of the one below. The grinding is effected by turning the upper stone by a wooden handle rising from it; two women often sitting at the opposite sides, so that each has to turn the stone only half round, which she can do with one hand, whereas she needs to use both if she work alone. The sound made when the mill is busy, though by no means musical, is always a pleasant one, for it speaks of comparative prosperity, while the absence of it marks all that is sad. To have the sound of the millstones silenced, therefore, is, with the prophets, a terrible accompaniment of public disaster, and the total destruction of a city could be boded forth by St. John, in no way more forcibly than by saying that "the sound of a millstone should be heard no more at all" in it.[1] The leaven used each day was a piece preserved from the day before,[2] for each day saw its "daily bread" provided by the house-mother, hot from her clay oven, with its fuel of "grass," which, the day before, had been waving in the wind, but had been cut down over night by the husband, to feed the fire on the morrow.[3]

[1] Jer. xxv. 10; Rev. xviii. 21. [2] Exod. xii. 15; 1 Cor. v. 7. [3] Matt. vi. 30.

Except when needed for a journey, bread is always fresh, I think, in the East.

The parable of the Hid Treasure is based on a custom marking all countries where there is no security for property. In England, for instance, "treasure trove"[1] is a term still often needed, to indicate money or valuables found, without any hint of ownership, in the ground or elsewhere, buried, perhaps for ages, to escape the dangers of troubled times, or perhaps with some ancient hero, in a barrow or grave accidentally discovered. But while characteristic of all countries, at one period or other of their history, the secreting of treasures in the earth has, in all ages, been peculiarly frequent in the East, where despotism and lawlessness have reigned from the remotest times to the present, to a degree unimaginable by the populations of the West. It will be remembered how often in the Psalms violence is dreaded;[2] indeed, robbery is mentioned no less than thirty-six times in the Old Testament. No one is safe, even now, in the East, from the most cruel exactions by local or imperial officials, if there be a suspicion that he has anything to plunder. Hence, it is a rule to avoid every appearance of wealth, so that even the finest houses are hidden inside the most poverty-stricken environments. At Damascus, for example, you enter, through a wretched door, in a wall of special meanness, to find yourself in the courtyard of a splendid mansion. But even this affectation of poverty is not thought enough; it is a constant habit to hide wealth of any kind that can bear such treatment, in the earth, and as this has been the practice from the remotest past, even in ordinary times, but still more in

[1] "Trouver," Old French "trover," to find.
[2] Ps. v. 6; vii. 2; x. 2, 8-10; xiv. 4; xviii. 48, etc.

periods of disturbance ; the amount of treasure thus buried all over the East, and, through the death of the owner, never dug up again—the place of its burial being lost, so that it still awaits chance discovery—is immense. Hence it has always been the business of some, to search for such hidden stores. Job, for example, speaks of those who "dig for death," that is, seek it, "more eagerly than they who seek them, dig after hid treasures."[1] In Proverbs, we are exhorted to "search for wisdom as eagerly as they do who search for hid treasure."[2] In Jeremiah, we read of treasures of wheat, barley, oil, and honey, hidden in the field, that is, in the open land.[3] And in Maccabees, we read that Antiochus, when he ravaged Judah, "took the hidden treasures which he found."[4] So general has been the custom through untold centuries, of seeking a safe hiding-place for money in the earth, that the native population believe any excavations must have the finding treasure as their object, and on this account often create great difficulties in the way of successful exploration. Travellers, moreover, are not seldom assumed by ignorant Arabs or others like them, to be able, by magic spells, to discover secret heaps of wealth, which, it is supposed, lie hidden near every ancient site. About fifty years ago, a number of copper jars were found near Sidon, full of gold coins of Alexander the Great and his father Philip, each worth a sovereign. The number of old coins, moreover, found in Palestine is wonderful, and the extreme poverty of most Orientals so stimulates them to get money by any possible means, that the finding of even a single coin may set afoot a rumour of treasure lying where it was discovered, and lead to wild digging all over the neighbourhood. Jeru-

[1] Job iii. 21. [2] Prov. ii. 4. [3] Jer. xli. 8. [4] 1 Macc. i. 23.

salem owes a really good piece of road, to such a search for supposed hoards. An immemorial tradition reported that a mass of treasure had once been buried near the Joppa gate, and to secure it, some speculators proposed to make this road, and were allowed to do so; but, as in too many similar cases, in all countries and ages, they got nothing.

The parable of the Pearl of Great Price may have been suggested to our Lord by the display of such costly fancies, on the robes of some of the courtiers from Tiberias, near His own town, whom He would from time to time see flashing past on horseback, in chariots, or in their gilded barges. In Christ's day, pearls were the form of luxury especially in fashion, particularly among women, and, hence, higher prices were given for them than for any of the precious stones. From the time of the taking of Alexandria, by Julius Cæsar, in B.C. 47, Rome became the great market for the vast supplies of pearls, obtained by the merchants of that city, from the fisheries in the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean, and, hence, they gradually accumulated there, as they have done, in our day, in Russia, where there may be seen, in the single Troitza cloister, on priestly robes, the robes of bishops, and on altar and funeral cloths, more pearls, perhaps, than there are in all Europe. Nero, indeed, covered the walls of some alcoves of the Golden House with continuous sheets of them, set, like a mosaic, in cement. They were, also, in great vogue among the ladies, for earrings, and slippers were often covered with a mass of them. As to the cost of this folly, Seneca says women sometimes carried two or three estates in their ears. Julius Cæsar bought, for his much-loved friend, Servilia, mother of Marcus Brutus, a single pearl which cost him about £32,500 (6,000,000 *sest.*).

The pearl of the parable may have come, overland, from the shores of the Indian Ocean, or from the Persian Gulf, the great seats of the pearl fishery: travelling merchants constantly passing, in these times, from land to land, carrying east, in their smaller or larger caravans, the productions and imports of Tyre, and bringing back the carpets of Babylon, or the spices of India, and, not seldom, some pearls or precious stones, which had the great advantage of being easily secreted, and representing a large value in small bulk. Vanity and luxury, moreover, secured a ready market for them, for even in the New Testament we find women exhorted not to adorn themselves with gold and pearls,[1] and the woman on the Scarlet Beast, in Revelation, is arrayed in gold, and precious stones, and pearls;[2] while the esteem in which they were held could not be more vividly shewn, than in the fact that the twelve gates of the New Jerusalem are said to be twelve pearls; each gate, a single pearl.[3]

In the question of St. Peter, which led to the delivery of the parable of the Unmerciful Servant, the apostle shews that he had advanced far beyond the rabbis, his former masters, in his extension of forgiveness to an offender, for they held that three offences might be pardoned, but not a fourth. Still, even under the teaching of Jesus, he had not entirely freed himself from the notion of a limited charity, and to enforce the duty of wider conceptions, the parable was spoken. Forgiveness like that of God, is the standard laid down by Christ; and as the duty of such boundless pity makes unwillingness to forgive the more sinful and deserving punishment, He delivers the parable to illustrate this. By the "kingdom of heaven" is meant, of course,

[1] 1 Tim. ii. 9. [2] Rev. xvii. 4. [3] Rev. xxi. 21.

the Messianic kingdom, which He was presently to set up; and it may be that it is to emphasize the comparison of this heavenly kingdom with that of an earthly monarch, that the king is named not by his title of "king" merely, but, as "a man (who was) a king." It is a curious side-light on ancient, or, rather, on Oriental life of all ages, that the "servants" of the king are called "slaves," in the Greek; many of even the highest officials in an Eastern court being often literally so. Those in the parable were evidently the highest dignitaries connected with the revenue of the kingdom; such as the receiver-general, grand treasurer, and the like, for no one could have owed so vast a sum as ten thousand talents, or about two and a half million pounds sterling, except by malversation of some great post, which gave him control of the finances of the State.[1] Compared with this, how wretched is the debt owing to such a colossal defaulter—about three pounds ten! The seizure and sale into slavery of a debtor's family, so revolting to us, was apparently the rule among the Jews, as it still is in some parts of the East.

We read, for example, of two sons of a widow being seized and sold for slaves, to pay the debts of their dead father;[2] and of sons and daughters enslaved for their father's debts, in the time of Nehemiah;[3] so that Christ's hearers would realize at once the verisimilitude of the narrative. To "fall down and worship" the bitterly wronged king, is only the Oriental way of expressing the lowly prostration of an inferior, to one greatly above him, common in the East. A person eager for a favour, or grateful for having had some special honour shewn him, will throw

[1] The talent was probably worth £240, or thereabouts.
[2] 1 Kings iv. 1. [3] Neh. v. 5; Isa. l. 1.

himself on his knees, bow his head to the ground, and kiss the hem of one's clothes, and even the dust on which one has trodden, or one's feet. It is pleasant to think that, though the heartless embezzler was, in the end, not only thrown into prison, but handed over to the torturers, to make him disgorge his plunder, there is no more said of selling his wife and children for his shortcomings. How must the lesson have gone to the heart of Peter, and all who listened, that the pardon by God of our load of sin, should, assuredly, cause us to forgive, from the heart, our brother, the far smaller debt he may owe us, and that, if we do not, the divine justice will certainly visit us at the last day. Yet how often do we, even now, meet counterparts of the parable! Sydney Smith tells one so striking that it merits being repeated. The very valuable living of Edmonton had fallen vacant by the death of Canon Tate, an old Yorkshire friend of his, and the patronage of it fell to him, as a brother canon of St. Paul's. By the rules of the chapter he could either take it himself, or present it to a relation or friend, but he determined to bestow it on the eldest son of its late holder, if found worthy, in recognition of old friendship, and from a wish to ward off the poverty which lay before the family, by Canon Tate's death. The son, to be thus liberally benefited, had, by the way, been curate to his father, so that he was not a stranger to the parish. Going over to Edmonton, the benefactor found the Tates in daily expectation of being turned out of the curacy and house; for the curacy, held by the eldest son, was, of course, ended by the death of the father. After some general conversation, the subject of the living was introduced by Smith, who, by gentle steps, broke it to them, that he had made the son Vicar. The whole family

were present, and were alike overcome by such a wonderful turn of fortune. All burst into tears, "and," says the good canon, "it flung me also into a great agitation of tears, and I wept and groaned for a long time. . . . The poor old lady, who was sleeping in a garret, because she could not bear to enter into the room lately inhabited by her husband, sent for me and kissed me, sobbing with a thousand emotions. The charitable physician, who was present, wept too. . . . I never passed so remarkable a morning, nor was more deeply impressed with the sufferings of human life, and never felt more thoroughly the happiness of doing good." But the curate-son, thus rescued from poverty and misery, and raised to affluence and honour, sorely disappointed his noble-hearted friend, for the first thing he did, as vicar, was to turn out his fellow-curate, the son of the clergyman who had been vicar before Canon Tate. The bishop, the dean and chapter, and Canon Smith himself, the giver of the living, expostulated, but in vain; the Unmerciful Vicar held fast to his harshness and cruelty. We do not, therefore, need to hope that the parable of the Unmerciful Servant has no sad repetitions in the life of to-day.[1]

The parable of the Two Sons shews the simplicity of Eastern life, in the sons of the owner of a vineyard being, as a usual matter, sent by their father to work in the vineyard; that is, to do the work of ordinary labourers. It reminds us of Saul coming "out of the field," that is, the open common, "after the herd,"[2] though he had just before been chosen to be their king, by the assembled nation; or of Elisha, the son of a shaphat, or judge, rich enough to have twelve yoke of oxen ploughing his land

[1] S. Smith's *Life*, i. 290; ii. 516. [2] 1 Sam. xi. 5.

at one time, being found by Elijah ploughing with his father's servants, as if only one of them. In early stages of colonial life we see a similar state of things, for I have seen a colonel's son driving oxen, and English gentlemen working in the fields at the humblest labour. But in Christ's day, when Roman civilization prevailed and population was dense, one might have expected a greater division of social life than the parable discloses. Honest labour is not, even now, thought discreditable to any one, in the East, and indeed, in theory, is honored even in Europe, in circles where it is farthest from being necessary, for the members of so august a monarchy as that of the German Empire all learn trades. The late Emperor Frederick, for example, was a printer,[1] and, as such, was able to astonish an establishment of the craft, which he chanced to visit.

In the parable of the Wedding Garment, our Lord does not allude to any robe of honour provided by the king, but, rather, to the special preparation, in regard to dress, which all desirous to shew respect to the host, would feel incumbent on them. To appear in any but a court dress, at a court function, would be felt a gross violation of good manners in our own times, deserving the expulsion of one offering so marked a slight to the rules of the occasion. Cicero reproaches Vatinius [2] for appearing in black at an entertainment, as if in mourning, when the host and the other guests were dressed in white; and we should be rightly offended if any one came to a private gathering, in clothes unsuitable to the festivity. It is said that Eastern sultans are wont to give a caftan, or robe of honour, to every one allowed an audience, and this may have been in

[1] *Magdeburgische Zeitung*, No. 304, June 16, 1888.
[2] *In Vatin.*, c. 12.

the thoughts of Christ as He spoke the parable, but there is nothing said of the "wedding garment" being a gift of the king, while the due respect of his guests towards their sovereign would, itself, secure that, except in a case of rudeness or open ill-will, there would be a rivalry in splendour rather than a want of it. To be "cast into outer darkness" was an expression needing no explanation to an Eastern crowd, for the pitchy night of their streets, after sunset, no windows or street lamps shedding light into them, was indeed "outer darkness," compared with the bright chambers within, and would be still more so, in contrast with the illuminated hall of a palace, on the night of a royal wedding. There had been at least three such marriages during Christ's life; that of Archelaus with Glaphyra, which ended so tragically for the poor lady;[1] that of Herod Philip, the one worthy son of Herod the Great, with Salome, daughter of Herodias, celebrated doubtless with huge pomp, in all probability at the grand new palace of Antipas, at Tiberias, in the last years of Christ's life; and that of Herod Antipas with Herodias, some time before the death of John the Baptist, which took place just before the opening of our Lord's ministry in its final completeness. All the details of such notable occurrences would be the subject of endless gossip, wherever He turned, and would make the parable of the marriage of a king's son specially attractive.

The everyday incidents of marriage rejoicings offered a striking subject for our Lord's wonderful power of instituting analogies between the most familiar details of the life about Him, and the relations of our higher nature to His spiritual kingdom. All the touches in the parable

[1] Geikie's *Life of Christ*, i. 259.

of the Ten Virgins, drawn from this source, would appeal instantly, with no need of explanation, to those who heard it, and, indeed, there is no place of any size in Palestine, even now, where it would not apply to the customs of the present day. In Nablus, the ancient Shechem, just above Jacob's well, it would be especially recognized as repeating the common experience of every one, for the bride is brought home, through the night, amidst a din of drums, fifes, shouts and rejoicings, breaking the stillness, to the very late hour, for Orientals, of ten o'clock, and there is the same excitement as is introduced in the parable. Old and young rise from their sleeping mats, and sally forth to see the procession—the virgins, in their best attire, leading the way, before the bridegroom and his companions, also decked with their finest; the bride, escorted by a guard of matrons and deeply veiled; the musicians, with their wildly inharmonious performances, the hurrying crowd, and, above all, the moving lights of great numbers of small lamps. Like a flattened cup with a cover, these are all in one piece, a handle at one end balancing a short spout, or mouth, at the other, with a bit of rag projecting from it for wick. Still, as in Christ's day, any maiden whose oil had run short, would have to hasten to the part of the bazaar where the oil-sellers had their stalls, for traders, now, as then, have their respective quarters. There was a street of the bakers, another of the jewellers, a third of the oil-sellers, and so on, in ancient Jerusalem; and it is the same to-day, in large towns.

My friend Dr. Post, of Beirout, describes a wedding feast very much the counterpart of the ordinary one just pictured, but worth repeating. After the reception and formalities of salutation, he says, a cup of water was brought

by an attendant, who also carried a basin, and poured the water over the right hand, as an act of ablution, for it is not deemed right to eat with unwashen hands, now, any

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more than in the days of the Pharisees. A huge platter, six feet across, of tinned copper, was then brought in, piled with a mountain of boiled crushed wheat, in which were morsels of boiled meat. A quantity of melted butter was

next poured over this pyramid, till it was quite saturated with the yellow stream. Then flat disks of bread were put beside the platter, and the guests having squatted on the floor round the savoury mass, and tucking up their sleeves, proceeded to help themselves with their fingers; using the bread to secure some of the liquid fat, and then eating the extemporized spoon; perfect silence being kept all the time, for eating is much too grave a matter with Orientals, to allow of their speaking while it is in progress.[1] Just such, we may be sure, was the "marriage feast," from the sight of which the virgins who came too late were shut out; for they could not, in any case, have eaten with the men, but would only have had the opportunity of peeping through any chink, and seeing the other sex enjoying themselves—though they evidently thought a great deal of even this small privilege; so secluded is female life in the East, from the social pleasures familiar to the West.

[1] *Palestine Fund Report*, 1888, 204.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ALLUSIONS IN THE PARABLES—(*continued*).

THE parable of the Talents brings before us a state of things, for which Palestine was indebted, to a large extent, if, indeed, I may not say altogether, to the introduction of heathen manners. The "servants" to whom their lord entrusted his money, were slaves, for, otherwise, he could not have punished the slothful servant as he is punished in the parable. The fact is, slaves, in antiquity, were, to a still greater degree than serfs in Russia, till late years, or negroes in America before the abolition of slavery, skilled mechanics, hired out by their masters, or kept at work by them, for their profit, on their own establishments. But the employment of slaves was not limited, among the Romans, to mechanical occupations. Business of every kind was managed largely through them; indeed, almost wholly. Money-lenders and bankers established branch offices and banks, as far as their connection permitted, or speculation seemed to warrant, and these were put under the charge of their slaves, or freedmen, exactly as the lord in the parable puts his money into the hands of his "servants," to be used by them for their master's benefit, in trading or exchange. The companies which farmed harbour dues from the state, employed for their collection, in their various offices, mainly, their slaves and freedmen. Any one intending to build, bought a slave architect, and all other building-trade slaves he might need. He who

proposed to give a theatrical performance or a show of gladiators, as a speculation, hired a company of slave actors, or slave gladiators, from their owners, for there were slave owners who had their slaves trained, some for the stage, and others for the arena. The merchant freighted his vessel with exports which he committed to his slaves and freedmen, as sailors, supercargoes, and business men; distributing the cargoes he received from the return voyages, through other slaves, who managed all the sales, both wholesale and retail. Mines and manufactures of every kind, were carried on by slaves only. Honest work by free men was, in fact, as discreditable as mechanical pursuits were, among whites, in the slave states of America; but in Rome the scorn of directly earning one's bread went farther, for no person who could afford to hire trained slaves, or to own them, would soil his fingers, or tire his brain, by any trade or profession.[1] Roman capitalists were to be found in all the provinces, and doubtless in Palestine, and everywhere carried out their business enterprises on the same lines, so that our Lord would have many opportunities of seeing cases like that sketched in the parable. The sums of money handed over to the three slaves were very considerable ; amounting to about £1,200 to the first ; £480, to the second ; and £240, to the third: so that the master, as a business man, intending his slaves to make money for him from his advances, had good reason to expect some profit in each case. Such a system must have ruined the market for free labour, and, no doubt, caused much of the extreme misery to which our Lord often refers. There was nothing left to the unrighteous steward, but to dig, and for that, he said, he had not strength, and he

[1] Mommsen's *Geschichte*, i. 857.

was ashamed to beg.[1] Palestine must, indeed, have been, always, more or less poor, for the needy are spoken of in the Bible, about a hundred and eighty times; the Gospels mentioning them at least twelve times. Wealth was accumulating in ever fewer hands, and the mass sinking lower and lower. Wealthy men could enormously increase their wealth, by the business skill of their slaves; land was being absorbed into ever huger estates; the extortions of Roman officials were more oppressive in each year, as there was less to extort; the crisis, in fact, was approaching, which, a generation later, swept away the Jewish nationality, in its despairing struggle with its all-powerful oppressors. The incident recorded by the Emperor Tiberius was daily illustrated before the eyes of Christ, ever watchful and immeasurably sympathetic. Being advised to give a shorter tenure of office to the governors of provinces, that they might not be able to plunder them so long, the emperor answered, in his striking way, by relating an anecdote. "When in Germany," said he, "I one day found a soldier lying at the roadside sorely wounded, and terribly tormented by flies, which blackened all the edges of the gashes. Pitying the poor fellow, I was about to brush off the pests, when he looked up, and begged me to let them alone; for, said he, 'These flies are full, but if you drive them away, another set of hungry ones will come, forthwith, who will suck out my last blood.'" It was, thus, better for the provinces, in the opinion of the emperor, to let things continue as they were. But what a commentary on the social economy amidst which Christ lived! The slave-owner, making a hundred per cent. by the business

[1] Luke xvi. 4.

abilities of his human chattels, throws a baleful light over these long-dead years.

The exquisite short parable of the Two Debtors[1] gives further interesting revelations of the social life of Christ's day. As at the present time, a guest, on arriving at his host's dwelling, had his sandals removed by a slave, who then poured water over his feet, at once for the coolness, and to remove the dust from them, for they had no stocking as with us; wiping them, after doing so, with a towel with which he was girt, as our Lord did, when He had washed the feet of the apostles.[2] To salute a guest with a kiss, was so recognized a courtesy, that the neglect of this politeness was a virtual insult. The East is, indeed, the land of formal kissing. If the Pharisee host of our Lord had wished to shew Him respect, he would have been at least as fervent in his salutations, as a Bedouin who met one of the camel-drivers on the way to Sinai. Each kissed the other on the cheek five times, holding each other's hand as they did so, and then asked polite question after question, and expressed the most pious wishes for the welfare of all the connections of each other, and only closed the long-drawn performance, when this had been patiently ended. It was usual to anoint the head and beard of a guest, where the host was at all well-to-do, so that the Psalmist pictures God as "anointing his head with oil," when He had "prepared a table before him."[3] The finest ointment was sold in alabaster flasks, to preserve its fragrance; some of these, found in the tombs of Egypt, still retaining the fragrant smell of the precious contents they had long ago held. Of course, however, a less expensive

[1] Luke vii. 41–43. [2] John xiii. 4, 5.
[3] Ps. xxiii. 5.; see also Ps. xcii. 10; cxxxiii. 2; Amos vi. 6, etc.

luxury was used as a rule; shops in Jerusalem supplying perfumed oils and ointments of different prices, made by women slaves, as in the old days of the Jewish kings.[1] Nor is the custom of oiling the hair by any means extinct among ourselves, though we do it at home, instead of having it done for us before dinner, by our host. To anoint the feet was a supreme expression of honour, and still more so when the ointment used was not the common native manufacture, but the hugely dear ointment brought from distant Eastern countries, as that had been which the penitent woman poured on the feet of Christ.

The parable of the Good Samaritan[2] enables us to picture the daily life round our Lord from still new points of view. The steep track between Jerusalem and Jericho is before us, descending more than three thousand feet, in a distance of about seventeen miles, through the wildest desolation, with the yawning abyss of the Wady Kelt on the one side, and the hideous sterility of the hills of the wilderness of Judæa on the other; a ready home for outlaws, who could almost defy pursuit in such a labyrinth of ravines and dark gorges. Indeed, it is thought by some that it had already, in the days of Joshua, the name of "the bloody way"—Adummim,[3] which it certainly bore in the time of Jerome, from the numbers of murders committed on it. Christ must often have heard of the wild lawlessness of robber bands haunting this dismal pass, and had doubtless availed Himself of the protection secured by joining a body of travellers, as we know He did when He last went up by it to Jerusalem.[4] A solitary wayfarer, therefore, like the Samaritan, had no chance, if caught by any of the bands

[1] 1 Sam. viii. 13, where the word translated "confectionaries" should be "ointment makers," feminine.

[2] Luke x. 30–37. [3] Josh. xv. 7. [4] Mark x. 46.

of ruffians which infested the road. Springing out on him, from some of the many openings into the hills, he was at their mercy, and might consider himself fortunate if they contented themselves with stripping him for the sake of his clothes, and leaving him less than actually dead from their violence. The passing down towards Jericho, of the priest and the Levite, was strictly in keeping with the everyday probabilities of the case, for Jericho was the Brighton of Jerusalem, and was much frequented by the ecclesiastics of the Holy City, when they were off duty. That representatives of these two classes, the clergy of the nation, should have been so coldly defective in common humanity, while one of a race despised as obnoxious to God Himself—the Samaritans—should, on the other hand, have shewn so loving a pity even to a Jew, simply because he was a fellow-man in trouble, was the most pointed rebuke to Jewish pride, and the most striking expansion of the conception of a true "neighbour," that could have been presented to a Jewish questioner.[1] The ideas of healing in the age of Christ have been noticed in an earlier chapter, but the "inn" to which the Good Samaritan carried his "neighbour" would hardly be made clear by that name. I have been in several, in different parts of Palestine; and as they still continue to offer their benefits in much the same way, in the unchanging East, as they did when Christ lived, it is easy from seeing them to fill up some details in our Lord's picture. Fancy a strong high wall, enclosing a hollow court oblong in shape, with no entrance except a high arched gate, at one end; a well in the middle of the empty space, and a line of bare chambers lining three sides; a stair at each corner, leading up to

[1] See Geikie's *Life of Christ*, on this incident.

a second row of small chambers over the lower ones, with a long balcony running before them, by which each is accessible; the stairs, moreover, continuing up to the top of four towers at the four corners, which serve as lookout places, to guard against the approach of danger. The lower chambers are for goods; the loads of all animals arriving being put into them for safety; the upper cells, as I might call them, on the other hand, are for the owners of the goods, or other travellers. Every one must bring his own bed and bedding, for there is nothing whatever in the cells, unless, indeed, we reckon an innumerable host of fleas, and other pests still worse. But a bed, in the East, is only a mat, and bed-clothes are a luxury unknown to Orientals, who generally sleep in what they wear by day. The beasts are loosened below, and left to sleep in the open space before the goods cells, after getting their chopped barley straw, still the fodder of all animals in Western Asia, as in the days of Abraham, with, now and then, a little barley for extra "provender."[1] The only official in these strange "inns" is a poor man, who acts as caretaker, receiving, as salary, any pittance given him by those who use the caravanserai. It was to this person that the wounded man in the parable was handed over; a rude enough "doctor," though, in this case, likely to do his best, under the quickening spell of the Samaritan's kindly pity.

The short parable of the Friend at Midnight[2] reproduces for us a homely glimpse of the humble life which has faded out, now, these two thousand years back. It is the hot season, when travelling by day is oppressive, and journeys are, therefore, begun at sunset, when the cool sea breeze has set in from the west. A peasant has started

[1] Gen. xxiv. 25. [2] Luke xi. 5-8.

thus, from a far-away village, lighted on his road, no doubt, by the bright moon; for in the East, as in western America, journeys, and evening gatherings, are timed by the fulness of that luminary. But the distance is so great that he only reaches his destination at midnight, when every one has been asleep for hours; Orientals lying down and rising with the birds. Inns, or anything like them, are quite unknown; friendly shelter under some roof is always to be had, but the lateness of the hour has difficulties of its own. Making for the home of his friend, the stranger is at once welcomed, as a matter of course; the only trouble is, what to give him to eat after his tiresome journey. A piece of bread and a draught of sour milk would be a nice supper, but so little is baked each day in the lowly host's home, that there is no bread left. Yet have some he must. Knocking at the door of a neighbour, therefore, whose comparatively large household insures that all the day's baking will not have been used, he is met by indignant protests at his disturbing any one at such an unseemly hour. In vain he tells his simple story. The churl cares nothing for the claims of hospitality, when they come waking him from his sleep, and asking him to get up and break his night's rest. "Be done with your knocking," he growls out, "and begone. The door is fastened for the night, and all in the house, as well as myself, are settled to sleep." Our version has, "My children are with me in bed," but the sleeping-mats of the East are only for single persons, and not even two, far less a man and his children, ever sleep in one "bed." Instead of "children," indeed, Augustine has "slaves," but this presupposes a person of higher position than the parable indicates. But the visitor will not be refused, till, at last,

the gruff house-father, to be rid of such irritating importunity, rises and gives him what he so persistently requests. What a soft pencil of light does it throw on life, as Christ saw it, that the good-hearted host should ask the "loan" of the bread needed for his guest; and how small must the "loaves" have been, of which three were required for the humble supper of one person. They were, in fact, only flat round "scones," baked every morning, as the early sound of the household mill-stones in every home, in the gray dawn, announces in all Eastern houses; to be made, presently, into the "daily bread" of the inmates.

The parable of the Great Supper brings before us an exceptionally full canvas of the country life of the time of the Gospels. We see the great man of the village, resolved on shewing hospitality, on a scale which others might envy but could not imitate; the slave sent, for the second time, to announce to those who had accepted the formal invitation delivered previously, that the day and hour of the feast had come; the purchase of a piece of land, which it is proposed to put under the plough; a rich neighbour, who can afford to buy five yoke of oxen at once, so that he must have had store of ready money, and also a broad tract of land to crop; a bridegroom, full of the gala doings of his wedding festivities; the narrow dusty streets, and side alleys out of them; the miserable objects always to be found sitting on the ground, against the windowless, flat-roofed low houses, or wandering in an aimless, hopeless creeping, from spot to spot—for the poor are so very poor in the East. Then, we see the maimed, including cripples deprived of the use of some limb by paralysis, or atrophy, or dislocation, never reduced or in any way

cared for—a class fearfully common in Palestine and the East generally—the only apologies even in Egypt, for medical or surgical practitioners, being mostly barbers, miserably ignorant and utterly unskilful;[1] while the blind, or half blind, who abound to an extent of which we, happily, can form no idea, are also brought before us. It is sad to think that while one person in a thousand, in Norway, is blind, one in a hundred has lost his sight in Egypt, and Palestine is not more fortunate, for in any small gathering of peasants I always noticed some blind, and, in one case, at Shiloh, there were many, among the few who came round me, thus afflicted, at least in one eye. Besides all these, the parable brings before us, as a still additional variety of wretchedness, the club-footed, of whom there are far more than in lands where medical skill is ready to cure all kinds of deformities. We are next taken outside the village, to the tracks that pass in the East for roads, and to the side lanes, that run among the gardens and vineyards, where the homeless find sleeping-places in the hot weather. That the rich man should have collected such a company of miserable creatures to his supper, would be very unlikely, if the West instead of the East had been in Christ's mind; but there is among Orientals, notwithstanding the despotism of their governments, or perhaps on account of it, as a natural reaction, an amount of honour paid to man as man, apart from any external accident of position or money, which we Occidentals cannot realize. I have seen a beggar speak to a kadi with as much self-respect as if they had been equals, and he was answered with no less respect by the judge. At Thebes, in the same way, when the Effendi got up a dancing spec-

[1] Lane's *Egyptians*, ed. 1890, p. 198.

tacle, for the Europeans then visiting the old city, one side of the long bare hall in which the women performed was appropriated to the foreigners, but the other was occupied by the most miscellaneous collection of natives; the beggar squatting cross-legged, on the clay bench that ran along the wall on both sides, as next neighbour to a substantial man in holiday clothes. The most democratic equality, in fact, prevailed; a state of things rising, probably, from the fact, that the positions of all are so defined and accepted, that there is no fear of too great familiarity following the most unrestrained social intercourse on special occasions. The great man of the village could, thus, revenge himself for the insult offered him by his invited guests, and fill his hall, though only with beggars, without compromising his dignity.

An incident that befell me at a village near Bethel illustrates some details of the short parable of the Lost Piece of Money. The wretched houses were built closely together, along the two winding sides of a narrow lane, into which so much foulness of all kinds had been thrown out, that there was very little poetry left, to delight the wanderer through this representative of Sweet Auburn. The streets are, in fact, in all Eastern towns or villages, the recognized dust-bins of the community, understanding "dust-bin" in the most liberal sense. Fortunately, the dogs act as sanitary police, to some extent, and the flies, and the hot sun, help in the same direction; but, after all, it would horrify an English Bumble to have a street as vile as those in the East at their best, and would, I almost believe, make a New York alderman admit that he had found some municipal arrangements as defective as at least some examples from his own territory. One of the huts

we entered was so full of smoke that we could not stand it; but, unfortunately, it was only the same as all its neighbours. A fire of thorns smouldered against the wall; the smoke making its way out, as it best could, by the door, for there was neither window nor chimney. It was in such a hovel, as we should call it, that the woman who had lost a piece of silver had to light her small lamp, even in the daytime, to find her humble treasure.[1] The bitter poverty of the East would, itself, account for the wild eagerness of the search after a trifling coin, but there were other impulses. At Bethlehem, the women wear a row of

SHEKEL WITH THE PORCH OF THE TEMPLE, AND THE *Lulab*.
See Geikie's "Life of Christ" (time of Bar Cochba).

coins over their forehead, and their sisters of Nazareth wear strings of them at each side of the face. At both places, these constitute, as a rule, the whole wealth of their possessor, and have been inherited as an heirloom, from previous owners, a mother, grandmother, or even some one farther back. That the string should break, and let one of the little store, thus sacred, be lost, might well make the unfortunate sufferer not only light her poor lamp, but sweep the floor over, a task not performed too often, in the hope of finding the precious sixpence or shilling. Nor is

[1] Luke xv. 8–10.

it to be wondered at, that, since the woman in the parable had only ten coins altogether in her ornaments, she should have made a wild outcry at discovering her loss, or filled the neighbourhood of her lowly home with the loud cries of joy, to let the house-mothers who had condoled with her know that she had found her money again.

The parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus brings up, from the long-dead ages, two extremes of the social life of Jerusalem, in Christ's day; the lordly rich man and the wretched beggar. Whatever their simplicity in patriarchal times, the Jews of later days gloried, with true Oriental delight, in colour, and gay clothing of white, purple in various shades, or red or scarlet clothes, either of wool, linen, or cotton; at times further adorned by gold threads interwoven through them.[1] At this time, one now and then sees costly clothes, which may help to give such magnates as Dives an outward presentment to us. A young man, for example, at one place, probably an only, or perhaps a favourite son, shone in the splendour of a tunic of the finest wool, in which all possible colours were blended, as in the gorgeous silk kefiyehs one buys at Damascus. Not a few persons in towns shew their social position, by expensive dress of varied fashions, for, even in the East, vanity demands indulgence in these matters. You see on one, a gaudy jacket, over a long silk or fine cotton tunic which reaches to the feet; the sleeves, perhaps, finely slashed, or buttoned back at the shoulders. Others glory in rich embroidery on their various articles of dress. The "fine linen" worn by Dives was probably Egyptian, for the Nile valley had the reputation of producing linen of a delicacy

[1] Judg. v. 30; 2 Sam. i. 24; Ps. xl. 10–14; 1 Macc. vi. 2; Jer. iv. 30; Ezek. xxiii. 6; Nah. ii. 3; Luke xvi. 19.

unknown elsewhere; nor was the fame unmerited, to judge from the wonderful fineness of much of the linen one sees in the collection at the Museum at Gizeh, unwound in our own day from royal or high-class mummies. The linen of Syria and Cilicia, however, was also famous. The price of purple cloth of the Tyrian dye, which, we may presume, Dives wore, was enormous; a pound of twice-dyed purple wool costing more than £17 sterling (1,000 *denar.*), while an outer robe of purple, of the best dye, came to about £125 (10,000 *sestertii*).[1] The self-indulgence of Dives in dress, would not, however, be confined to having a wardrobe according to the comparatively modest standard of the West, for Orientals invest large amounts in costly clothing, so that the Hebrew kings needed a "keeper of the wardrobe," or, as we should read, "of the clothes." Yet he could hardly have reached the extravagant selfishness of modern times, when we think of Charles the Bold taking 400 chests of gold and silver stuffs with him, on his progresses, and among these, 100 robes embroidered with gold; or of the dress of Baroness Burdett-Coutts, which she told Moore the poet, in shewing it to him, was worth about £250,000 sterling!—that is, of course, from the value of the precious stones sewn on it; or of the diamond splendours of Prince Esterhazy, the plume of his hat being so crusted with these glittering baubles, that no one could be found willing to buy it at the cost of making his head ache with such a weight of barbaric show. But though Dives fades, in his selfishness, before these millionaires, so far as personal decorations of attire are concerned, he was in principle as bad, for he lived for himself and neglected the claims of his fellow-men.

[1] Friedlaender, *Sitten-Gesch.*, iii. 47.

But fine dress was not his only form of self-worship; he spent his life in mean pleasures, taking to those of the table with infinite gusto, and lavishing on them vast expense. Roman civilization had found its way into Palestine a generation before Christ, and one of its abuses, which came with better characteristics, was the passionate love of good eating, carried, often, to the revolting excess of using emetics to empty the stomach, that it might be possible to enjoy a second meal. The bill of fare of an installation dinner of a priest, at Rome, about fifty years before the birth of Christ, and before the rise of the passion for excessive display and indulgence at table, which marked the earlier times of the empire, still, fortunately, remains, from which we may, perhaps, picture, with an approach to the reality, a meal of poor Dives. At what we may call lunch, there were sea-urchins, raw oysters to any extent, two kinds of shell-fish, a thrush on asparagus, a fat hen, a ragout of oysters and shell-fish, white and black chestnuts; then again, different kinds of shell-fish and sea-creatures, with beccaficoes, that is, fig peckers—a small frugiverous bird, still sorely persecuted in Italy as a choice mouthful for epicures—venison loin, wild boar, pies of various kinds of birds, with pie-crust, whelks, and once more beccaficoes. At dinner proper, the succession of dishes was varied, some of them being teats of sows, ducks of different kinds, roast and boiled, boar's head, fricassees of fish, fricassees of sow teats, hares, roast fowls, puddings, and bread from Picenum, on the other side of the peninsula; a province famous for its splendid wheat. Unfortunately the menu of the dessert has not come down to us, but it is clear from what we have, that the reverend gentlemen of those days could have held their own, as lovers of good living, with any con-

secrated or lay diners-out of our own times. As a Jew, many of the dishes at this particular feast would be abomination to Dives; but if we have to leave them out, it is most probable that their place would not fail to be supplied by as many others, to which Levitical objections could not be taken. The accounts we have of the luxury and gluttony of even high priests at Jerusalem, within a few years after the crucifixion, shew how zealously they copied these vices of their Roman masters. One is denounced for wearing silk gloves, to prevent his soft hands being polluted when he was offering sacrifice; another is vilified as the "disciple of gluttons and gourmands;" while a third is alleged to have had in his cellars, or set apart for his kitchens, three hundred barrels of wine, three hundred calves, and more than a hundred *bushels* of pigeons.[1] We cannot, indeed, flatter ourselves that we are much more puritanical, when we remember the £20,000 sterling spent on entertaining the Sultan of Turkey, at the Guildhall, in London, but there was clearly the best ground for our Lord painting selfish indulgence, in dress and at the table, as only too prevalent in His day. As to the number of the very poor in Judæa in the time of Christ, the whole of the Gospels reflect it; almost every chapter shewing some allusion to them directly or more remotely. That the provision for them was very wretched, is implied in a diseased creature like Lazarus being simply laid at the gate of a rich man, in hopes of pity from visitors. Experience must have told him that he had little to expect from one given up to his pleasures; yet the solicitude of Dives for his brothers, when he himself was in "torments," indicates rather want of thought, in his neglect of the beggar, than want of

[1] Geikie's *Life of Christ*, i. 345.

heart. The proletariat of Rome was, no doubt, more wretched, as a whole, than that of rural districts, like Palestine, as that of London or any great city must be more miserable than that of sparser populations; but in Jerusalem, at least, the poverty of Rome must have found a limited counterpart.

In the great city on the Tiber the condition of the submerged myriads was terrible. Their homes were commonly cheerless attics; sometimes up two hundred steps, and, even then, so low that they had to bow to get in. Their hearth was often enough cold; a crock without a handle, a rush mat, a heap of straw, an empty bedstead, and abundant vermin, their only furniture; a short toga their one covering from the cold, by night or day, even in winter; and the sourest wine and black bread, their only food. The better class of the poor lived on cabbage, beans, lentils, onions, garlic, turnips, and pease, in addition to their bread; a sheep's head, boiled with leeks, coming as a special feast on their rare high days. The bridges over the Tiber, and the ascents of the hills round Rome, were the favourite hunting-grounds of the beggars, but every place that promised quarry was infested by them. On all sides, one saw their long faces, their rags or even nakedness, their deformities and defects; blind men, led by a dog, being one of the most common spectacles. Their cries were distressing, for one and all appealed aloud, with a singing voice, for pity. Their shelter by night, from the rain and cold, was often only an open arch; their dog their only friend; their only food "dog's bread;" their only possessions, a stick, a wallet, a poor blanket or mat; and their only escape from all this misery, death in some lonely corner, uncared for and unnoticed. Nor was the

ignominy of their life closed even by death, for their despised corpses were thrown into public burial pits, with the bodies of beasts, and left with hardly a pretence of being hidden in friendly earth.[1] The life of the beggars of Palestine, like Lazarus, may not have been, in all points, the same, but we may be sure it was very little more endurable.

In the parable of the Unprofitable Servant, Christ once more transports us into the midst of the country life of His day, with its slave-labourers, its ploughing, sheep-tending, and waiting at table on the master, but these have been already noticed.

In the parable of the Unjust Judge we have a proof of the unchanging characteristics of Eastern life, for "unjust" judges have been the curse of all Oriental lands, as far back as history reaches. In Exodus we find the bearing false witness denounced, and the evil is mentioned at least eighteen times, in the various books of Scripture. Truckling to the rich and powerful, to enable them to gain a cause, and, above all, the bribery of judges, are constantly introduced as prevalent crimes.[2] In Egypt, at least until the English occupation, the courts of justice shewed just such a state of affairs as the parable indicates. The rank of a plaintiff or defendant, or a bribe from either, often influenced the decision of a judge. In difficult or protracted law-suits, bribes were frequently paid by both sides, and then the decision went in favour of him who had given most. "The shocking extent to which the practice of bribery and suborning false witnesses is carried in Muslim courts of law," says Lane, "can scarcely be credited."[3] It is the same everywhere in the East. Gen-

[1] Friedlaender's *Sitten-Geschich.*, i. 281, 282.
[2] Exod. xxiii. 1 ff.; Lev. xix. 15 ff.; Deut. i. 16 ff.; xvi. 19 ff., etc., etc.
[3] Lane's *Modern Egyptians*, p. 103.

eral Gordon explained his having brought no money back from the Soudan, after having long held the governor-generalship, at £6,000 a year, by saying that he had given it all away, to pay the judges and magistrates so liberally, that they would not need to get bribes, or would be above taking them, and the poor would thus get justice. Among the Jews, the neglect, perversion, and corruption of judicial functionaries, had been the constant burden of the prophets; and we may be sure that things were at least as bad, in an age which even its own rabbis denounced as exceptionally wicked. "To justify the wicked for reward, and to take away the righteousness of the righteous from him," was, as the "unjust judge" shewed, still only too common among the contemporaries of our Lord.[1] Bribery, indeed, is still a daily occurrence in Palestine at this time. A kadi told a friend of mine that he had to pay four hundred pounds Turkish to the Sheikh el Islam, at Constantinople, for his office; a sum equal to £368 sterling, and he could hold it only for two years; the entire salary being no more than eight pounds Turkish, or about seven guineas a month. "How," said he, "am I to live? I have to keep up my position as kadi, that is, the judge of the town and district, and have to save enough to buy another place when my two years are out." The answer was not expected to be doubtful. He must accept bribes on every hand. One case of which I know, illustrates this frank admission. Two Jews had a place of business at Haifa. The one lived at Beirout; the other kept the shop at Haifa along with the uncle of his Beirout partner,

[1] Isa. i. 17, 21; v. 7; x. 2; xxviii. 7; lvi. 1; lix. 4; Jer. ii. 8; v. 1; vii. 5; xxi. 12; Ezek. xxii. 27; xlv. 8, 9; Hos. v. 10; vii. 5, 7; Amos v. 7, 15, 24; vi. 12; Hab. i. 4, etc.

who represented his nephew. After a time, the Haifa man suspected the uncle who had been thus thrust upon him, and wrote to the partner at Beirout to come and examine matters. Having done so, the result was, that the Haifa man told him he would not have the uncle any longer; that he, the partner, must, himself, come and live at Haifa, to manage his share of the business, personally, or, that it must be wound up. Next day, on the Haifa man going to his shop, to open it, he found it sealed up by the government, contrary to law, and without any notice. But, for a time, nothing could be done. At last, however, arbitration was decided upon, and a settlement of the dispute effected. But, now, the secret of the sealing up of the shop came out, for the Beirout partner boldly demanded repayment of the fifty medjidies, about eight pounds twelve shillings sterling, which he had given the kadi to get him to close the premises officially. If this could take place to-day, in what condition would justice be, two thousand years ago!

The parable of the Pharisee and Publican is another sketch from the life of the day. The temple, the hour of prayer, the self-complacent legalist, the humble tax-gatherer; the voluntary fasts of the Pecksniffs of the day, to put God more and more heavily in their debt, from their doing more than He asked; the paying tithes beyond what the law demanded, with the same object; the outside world, as self-righteousness saw it, made up, as to "the rest of men," to such a saint as the Pharisee, of extortioners, unjust, adulterers, and riffraff like the publican who dared to pollute the sanctuary with his accursed presence. For, as one whose very calling was an insult to the rabbinical commands, he was regarded as "cursed," beforehand, by Jeho-

vah.[1] But it is not in the temple of Jerusalem, alone, or in the streets of the Holy City, that one meets, even now, representatives of both Pharisees and publicans.

In the parable of the Pounds some of the details of the parable of the Talents reappear, but others open fresh glimpses of the men and manners of the age. The nobleman who went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom and to return,[2] may well have been Archelaus, who, in our Lord's infancy, had gone to Rome, to ask the succession to his father, Herod the Great, as far as he could obtain it, but had to come back with only the subordinate title of tetrarch; that is, the ruler of a fourth part of his father's dominions. All supreme honours, in those days, came from the city on the Tiber. As in the parable, moreover, the whole nation rose in revolt as soon as Archelaus had sailed, and fought so bitterly before they could be crushed, that, in the struggle at Jerusalem, the grand porches or porticoes of the temple were burned by the Romans, to free themselves from the volleys of darts and missiles hurled down from the roofs; a destruction that required the labour of years to repair, even in part. Indeed, Josephus affirms, that eighteen thousand men were continually employed completing or restoring the temple till the time of Nero,[3] so that through Christ's whole life, great gangs of workmen must have been always busy on some parts of the temple buildings. As in the parable, again, the Jews sent an embassy to Rome, to get Archelaus set aside by Augustus, nor can there be a doubt that such a ferocious despot, when, in spite of all this, he returned as ruler, would order "his enemies, who would not that he should reign over them," to be brought to him and slain in

[1] John vii. 49. [2] Luke xix. 12-27. [3] A.D. 54-68.

his presence.[1] The calling ten slaves and giving them each money, with which to trade on his account till his return, though strange to us, was in strict keeping with Oriental ideas; for as far back as Solomon, we see that the king was the supreme merchant of the country,[2] as Mehemet Ali was in Egypt, at the beginning of this century. Even now, indeed, slaves are made the source of profit to their masters in Palestine, as in an instance of which I knew, where an official, in charge of a number of mounted police, enrolled his slaves, and drew their pay, as his own property. The amount of money given to each slave in the parable was very small; amounting to only about three pounds seven shillings sterling—the value of a "mina." That the slave who had made ten pounds' profit on one, should be appointed over ten "cities," and that he who had gained five pounds, should be set over five "cities," is quite in accordance with Oriental ways, even now. The slave of to-day may be the governor of a later time. But, indeed, even in haughty Rome, slaves became, within a generation after Christ, the greatest personages in the empire, below the emperor. Claudius was virtually ruled by his freed slave Pallas, who amassed an amazing fortune by his elevation to imperial favourite; and the procurator Felix, before whom St. Paul appeared, was the brother of Pallas, and had like him been a slave.

[1] Jos., *Ant.*, xvii. *passim.* [2] 2 Chron. ix. 21.

CHAPTER XXV.

ALLUSIONS TO THE WEATHER IN THE GOSPELS.

The difference in length between the longest and the shortest day, in Palestine, is more than four hours; the one being fourteen hours, twelve minutes; the other, nine hours, forty-eight minutes. Hence, the Jewish hours varied in length, from forty-nine to seventy-one minutes; the day being counted, all round the year, from the rising to the setting of the sun, as the night was reckoned, on the other hand, from the setting of the sun to its rising. On the longest day, the first traces of morning are scarcely discernible at four, while evening has already begun at eight. Christ and the evangelists, as a rule, follow the ordinary usage; speaking, in different places, of the third, sixth, seventh, ninth, tenth, and eleventh hours.[1] In His manifold journeyings, our Lord had experience of every vicissitude of the day and night, the winter cold and the summer heat, the climate of the hills, and that of the Lake of Galilee and of the Dead Sea. For, small as it is, Palestine offers at least five distinct zones of temperature. When He passed through Jericho, or wandered through levels not higher than His own Lake of Galilee, He had a subtropical flora round Him. Snow is unknown even up to the level of the lake, and a delicious mildness invites

[1] Matt. xx. 3, 5, 6; xxvii. 45; Mark xv. 25; Luke xxiii. 44; John i. 40; iv. 52; xix. 14.

one abroad, when wild snow-storms are whirling through the air on the bare heights of the Jerusalem hills; the contrast which led Herod to seek Jericho for the winter, and made the rich slopes around it, the prized retreat of the wealthy, from all high-lying parts of the land. The richer priests and Levites fully realized this. Disposed to make the best of both worlds, like most of us, such of them as the long intervals between their weeks of duty at the Temple, and their good fortune in respect to a home, enabled "to go down," when they had finished their "course," and luxuriate in the groves of balm and of palms, eagerly did so. Jericho was, as I have said, the Brighton of Jerusalem. The barley harvest was ripe when Christ left it for the last time, about the eighth of April, after resting overnight in the despised home of the chief of the local excise, Zaccheus; but it was very different when He had climbed the long weary ascent to the Holy City. He would find the crops round it, still weeks from being ripe: their much higher position making the harvest very much later. The "first-fruits" sheaf would be carried up from the Jordan valley, to be "waved before the Lord" at the approaching feast, perhaps at the very time when He, our Passover, was climbing the long, rough mountain pass, to "accomplish His decease at Jerusalem." In summer, however, the heat is proportionately intense in the deeply sunk valley of the Dead Sea; the thermometer standing, at Engedi, in July, even after sunset, at 95° Fahrenheit.

Whether Jesus, at any time, preached in the towns and villages of the rich plains which reach along the sea-coast, from Carmel to Gaza, is not told; but he would doubtless cross them, from time to time, in His ceaseless wanderings. When He did so, He would find Himself, wherever

He might be, between Gaza and Sidon, in a region with a climate of its own. Oranges and citrons grow luxuriantly in it, under the soft influence of the sea air, which comes laden with such wealth of moisture as makes the soil, except for orange groves and the like, independent of artificial irrigation. He would pass through great beds of melons, even on the sea edge, so helpful is the evening ocean wind; and in other parts, the sound of the water-wheel would meet Him, raising streams from the exhaustless wells of the plains, for such growths as needed them. The wide sea on one side, would carry His thoughts afar, to the other sheep He had, not of the Jewish fold, beyond the blue waters; and on the other, inside the long ranges of sand dunes, then, as now, reaching inland from the strand, He would walk under the stately heads of countless palms, glorious in spring with splendid blossom, yet never bearing fruit in autumn, since the mean temperature of the year is only 65° Fahrenheit. In His own district, the hills—from 500 to 3,000 feet above the sea—He was in the land of the olive, the fig, and the vine. In winter, He would see the pools of Jerusalem glittering with a thin coat of ice, after cold nights, and He might happen, at a time, to be caught in a pitiless snow-storm, very trying to a country with few means of heating the houses, and a population very lightly clad. One of their poets, indeed, has embodied the feelings of such times, in the verse: "He giveth snow like wool; He scattereth the hoar frost like ashes; He casteth forth His ice like bits of bread, broken small: who can stand before His cold?"[1] As spring advances, the warmth increases: yet a snow-storm has been known in April, at Jerusalem. But though the day be deliciously warm, as

[1] Ps. cxlvii. 16, 17.

a rule, about Easter, the clearness of the atmosphere, by allowing the heat of the sun to radiate freely into space, makes the nights cold; so that we can understand how Peter was glad, at the house of the high-priest, to warm himself at a fire, while, the next day, Jesus was suffering terrible thirst on the cross, from the heat of the sun beating down on His bare head. On the rocky surface of Golgotha, on which the sunbeams were reflected from the city wall, close by, the heat of the afternoon might readily mount to nearly 90°. Even in May, our Lord had to bear great variations of temperature, for the heat, some days, when the sirocco was blowing, would rise, in the shade, to over 100°, while there would be nights on which there were 20° of cold. Curious to say, the sirocco is found to make water exposed to it, deliciously cool, so that women put out their skins and jars of drinking water, covered with wet cloths, when it blows, and thus obtain the refreshment of really cold water when it is most needed. From May, the heat gradually and imperceptibly increases, till, in August, it reaches its highest. But the weather continues long hot, September and October being very little cooler than August; hot south-east winds sometimes raising the temperature, in the latter month, to 100° Fahrenheit. In November, the thermometer sinks, at times suddenly, to a comparatively low point; the high warmth of the earth in earlier months having passed off, partly by the falling of the early rains. The sun meanwhile grows weaker, and the extreme radiation tells on the nights more keenly, so that December is still colder, on the average. Across the Jordan, in Moab, and in the south, at Beersheba, a different climate met our Lord. He more than once journeyed along the east side of the river, and may well have been at Beersheba

when He visited the various districts of Judæa, where He preached from place to place, till John was thrown into prison.[1] The contrasts He would feel, there, between day and night, and winter and summer, would be extreme, for, in March, it sometimes happens that through the night the thermometer falls to 10° below freezing, and in the morning the grass is white with hoar frost, while the heat at noon is up to 80°. The appearance of these undulating plains, in spring, is charming. Rich, fragrant grass, enamelled with countless flowers, covers the ground, and as far as the eye can reach, one sees herds of grazing camels, cattle, sheep, and goats, with solitary Arabs riding swiftly, here and there, on fine horses, swift dromedaries, or spirited asses. No tree, however, is to be seen, and the pitiless sun smites down on the poor tentless shepherd. Christ must often have realized the experience of Jacob, in similar regions, when, "in the day the drought consumed him, and the frost by night."[2] As summer advances, however, the variations of temperature diminish, but the glowing sky erelong dries up all moisture, and vegetable life disappears, before the fiery breath of the unclouded heavens.

Looking north from His home at Capernaum, our Lord's eyes would often rest on an aërial region very different alike from Beersheba and His own lake, in climate—the majestic heights of Hermon and Lebanon. I first saw these grand mountains from the top of the rough ascent known as the Steps of Akkrabbim, on entering the territory of Samaria; and even from that great distance, the snowy peaks flashed in the upper heavens with a splendour as of legions of angels, watching their favourite land from its loftiest outlook. From every point of the Lake of Gali-

[1] John iii. 22. [2] Gen. xxxi. 40.

lee they are as resplendent, lifting the thoughts to a higher spiritual region; so far above the rest of the world are they; so pure and sublime. When I crossed the mighty ranges, in April, the highest peaks were still covered with snow, which reached so far down, in patches, that I ate my dinner with snow at my side. Indeed, it remains, in some of the upper hollows, all the year. In these alpine regions dew falls at all seasons, "dew on Hermon" becoming, from this, a proverbial expression for abundance of such blessings.[1] So copious was it, says the Psalmist, that it flowed down from Hermon to Zion! An important ice trade is carried on between the snow-fields and the different towns of Palestine, and appears to have been active long before Christ's day, for in Proverbs we read of a faithful messenger being as grateful as snow in harvest.[2] For five months the sun shines without a cloud—from May to September—the months in which, especially, Christ must often have been grateful for a "cup of cold water," in His weary journeys over the hot dry chalk hills, where no shading trees protected Him from the flaming sun, once worshipped, appropriately, in these very regions, in these months, as Moloch, the Destroyer! Sometimes, indeed, He would find the rainless season begin in April and end only in the beginning of November; so that we may fancy the exhaustion that must often have oppressed Him. It was in November, in fact, that He sat by the well of Samaria, wearied with His journey.[3] How absolutely Palestine depends on its rains, for any growth of the soil, strikes every reader of the Old Testament; but it becomes still clearer when we remember that, except on the sea-coast plains, which cannot be said to have been held by

[1] Ps. cxxxiii. 3. [2] Prov. xxv. 13. [3] John iv. 6.

the Hebrews, in Bible times, it is not possible to irrigate the soil artificially, as, indeed, Moses told his people beforehand.[1] Even in the rainy months, however, there are many fine days; rain falling, at Jerusalem, on an average only on seven days of each month, from October to April; the rest of the time, that is, three days out of four, being delightful. Yet, when it rains worst, Palestine, like other hot countries, goes to extremes, the rain descending in torrents of which more temperate climates know nothing; a peculiarity implied in our Lord's picture of the house, built on the sand, being washed away by such a storm.[2] London, with its many weeks of rain, has a yearly fall of only 25 inches; Jerusalem, with its forty-eight days in which there is rain, has a yearly fall of 20 inches. In picturing the daily life of Christ, we must not forget how often He must have had to brave the wild winter storm. The beginning of the early rains is, however, often announced only by light showers, which the thirsty earth drinks in at once, leaving no surface stream to fill any of the long-dried-up beds of the winter torrents. Sometimes, on the other hand, these rains begin with a wild storm, or, in the Hebrew way of speaking, "Jehovah uttereth His voice; there is a tumult of waters in the heavens, and He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; He maketh lightnings for the rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of His treasuries."[3] It was such a storm that broke over Ahab and Elijah, when the heaven grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain.[4] It was such a tempest that turned Esdraelon into a quagmire, and made the chariots of Sisera helpless, before the fierce

[1] Deut. xi. 10. [2] Matt. vii. 27. [3] Jer. x. 13.
[4] 1 Kings xviii. 45; see also Ps. xviii. 9, etc.; xxix. 3, etc.

charge down-hill, of Barak.[1] More than five inches of rain often fall within twenty-four hours, filling the torrent beds in a very short time, till they send down roaring floods, dangerous, exceedingly, to the wanderer, on whom they may burst in some narrow spot.[2] Their fierce rush heaps up great beds of stones, of all sizes, and vast quantities of earth, in the ravines through which they sweep,[3] and, then, as suddenly, they pass away; very few shewing any stream at all, a few hours later, and even these drying up at the approach of the hot season. It is to this that Job alludes, when he speaks of "brooks that pass away; that are black by reason of" (the melting of) "the ice" (on Lebanon), and "in which the snow hideth itself: when men would make a dam to preserve the water, they vanish: when it is hot, they are consumed out of their place."[4] Christ must often have seen all this, for, as I have already noticed, He speaks of the sudden rise of the winter floods above their banks, their wild whirling wave, at times surging against the hamlets on the hill slopes above, and sweeping away the houses that have not a solid foundation.[5] Weakened by the heavy rains, the flat roofs, formed of rolled earth, soon begin to let through the drops, as Christ must frequently have found; reminding Him, as it does us, of the humorous comparison of this annoyance to that caused by a brawling wife, from which there is no escape.[6] The dampness makes its way inside, before long, rusting everything of iron,[7] and in parts, where, as on the sea-coast plains, the walls and roofs are only mud, these soon, becoming soaked to excess, collapse altogether.[8] All this was

[1] Judg. iv. 14; xx. 21.
[2] Job xiv. 19.
[3] Matt. vii. 27.
[4] Matt. vi. 19, 20.
[5] Ps. xviii. 4; lxxxviii. 17.
[6] Job vi. 15–17.
[7] Prov. xix. 13; xxvii. 15.
[8] Ezra xiii. 11.

a common experience to our Lord, and so, also, was the dissolving of the dust and hard earth of the streets and paths, into deep mud, during the winter; "the mud of the streets" being as often noticed by the sacred writers as their dust, which, in dry weather, was so familiar a characteristic, that Christ alludes to it more than once.[1] Travelling in winter, amidst penetrating cold rain, swollen torrents, the paths deep with mire, is very hard, and hence Jesus tells His disciples, "Pray that your flight be not in the winter." We do not read, in the Gospels, of the heavy winter rains, except in the Sermon on the Mount; but Christ must often have encountered weather like that mentioned in Ezra, when the people sat outside, on the ground, at a public assembly, "trembling for the great rain."[2] And who can doubt that the rainy day, on which brief intervals of pause occurred, only to be interrupted by the gathering of fresh clouds, not seldom brought to His mind the picture of joyless old age, drawn from it by the Preacher?[3]

In autumn the peasant can do nothing till the first "early rains" have fallen, but, as this sometimes happens before the middle of October, "the treader of grapes" now and then finds himself busy alongside "the sower."[4] On an average, there are, each rainy season, four storms, often heralded by furious tempests of wind, and filling the heavens with blinding lightning, violent thunder peals, and deluges of rain; even hail falling occasionally. The snow, which I have spoken of as seen, frequently, in the winter, at Jerusalem, of course whitens also the other hilly

[1] Luke x. 11; see also 1 Sam. ii. 8; 2 Sam. xxii. 43; Ps. cxiii. 7; xviii. 42; Zech. x. 5.

[2] Ezra x. 9. [3] Eccles. xii. 2. [4] Lev. xxvi. 5; Amos ix. 13.

parts of Palestine, though not every year; and thus Christ and the Evangelists could speak from what was familiar to them, when the raiment of the resurrection angel and of the transfiguration robes, is compared, for its whiteness, to the snow.[1]

The delayed commencement of the early rains inflicts sore privation on man and beast, from the scarcity of water it causes. The hart pants after the water-brooks, and the wanderer faints in the dry and thirsty land, where no water is. In a country like ours, thirst is seldom a serious trouble, and need never be long without relief, but its reality as a terrible thing, in a country like Palestine, or in the deserts round it, is seen by its being mentioned no fewer than fifty times in Scripture, and by the importance ascribed to relieving it. To give a cup of cold water in His name, Christ tells us, "shall in no wise lose its reward," and to have given drink to the thirsty is named by Him, as one of the good deeds for which, if they sprang from love to Him, "the righteous enter into life eternal."[2] Nor is the suffering caused, the only evil. The peasant can do nothing with the ground.

But, if the delay of the early rain be thus calamitous, that of the latter rains, which fall in March and April, is still more hurtful. In these months, the grain, which has stood still during January and February, must shoot up and ripen, and its doing so depends on the proper rainfall. If that be wanting, the stalk grows yellow, and the ear, if it appear at all, is dry and shrivelled. Our Lord must often have realized, in the anxiety of the peasant, the force of Job's words: "They opened their mouths wide, as for the latter rain;"[3] or the significance of the comparison, in

[1] Matt. xvii. 2; xxviii. 3. [2] Matt. x. 42; xxv. 42. [3] Job xxix. 23.

Proverbs, of the king's favour to a cloud of the latter rain.[1] We may be sure that He who sympathized with us in all our troubles, would not be indifferent to those of the husbandman, whose eyes wandered, hour by hour, to the glowing heavens, to see if there were no signs of the much-needed shower. Summer fruit, lentils, cucumbers, melons; all on which the common people mainly lived, depended on the latter rain. They could not be planted till it had fallen and softened the ground. How great a trouble this is, may be imagined from the fact that, at this time, the peasantry live, for three months, well-nigh exclusively on the fruit of the huge cactus known as the prickly pear—the ordinary hedge of gardens and so-called orchards, in many parts of the country, and the main crop on the broad terraces of Mount Ebal; while a kind of coarse cucumber, known as the "facouse," growing well-nigh a yard long, is a second staple article of their diet. It is curious, by the way, that the name of the peasantry, now universal—the fellahin—was that used by our Lord for them in His day—the Aramaic, which He spoke, calling them "Pelachin," a difference of only the first letter.

The rainy season ends finally, in most years, with the close of April; "rain in harvest," that is, at the end of May, being as out of the ordinary course, in the opinion of the Hebrews, as snow in summer.[2] The sheaves can, hence, be left in the open air, on the threshing-floor, for months, till the cattle have trodden the straw into small fragments, and gradually emptied the ears of all their grain; the promise that the threshing-time would reach to that of the vintage, readily fulfilling itself in good years.[3] Christ saw this everywhere over the country, in His man-

[1] Prov. xvi. 15. [2] Prov. xxvi. 1. [3] Lev. xxvi. 5.

hood, and in the long years of His boyhood and youth, at Nazareth, it would be constantly before Him, at the threshing-floor, then, as now, in the sweet little valley below the white houses that rise up the white slopes. If in the summer, light clouds ever shewed themselves, they could not condense into rain, from the heat, and their shadow was a great relief.[1] Thus Isaiah speaks of the war-shouts of the fierce enemies of Israel being stilled by God, as the heat in sore drought is abated by the shadow of a cloud.[2] A "cloud of dew in the heat of harvest"[3] must often have been welcome to the Master, as, indeed, any shade is in the hot months, in these regions, for one sees the Arabs gladly stretching themselves along the ribbon of shadow cast by the telegraph-poles in the desert. No wonder then, if Christ, like the maiden in Canticles, "sat under the shadow" of any chance tree He passed, "with great delight,"[4] or rejoiced to rest, as I have often done, in the shadow of a great rock, in a weary land.[5] Too often, He would have the glorious sight of a "morning without clouds;" the sun rising in wondrous splendour over the eastern hills; its undimmed glory foreboding a sultry day; but, at times, delicate wreaths of mist would veil the tops of the Nazareth hills, after sunrise, to vanish when the rays of the climbing sun shone through them, as Hosea had often noticed on the hills of Ephraim; his poetic fancy seeing in the spectacle, the suggestion of the fine image, "O Ephraim, O Judah, your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew that passeth away!"[6] Smitten by the light into wondrous sky-embroidery of scarlet and snowy whiteness, they rise ever higher into the azure, till

[1] Prov. xxv. 14. [2] Isa. xxv. 5. [3] Isa. xviii. 4.
[4] Cant. ii. 3. [5] Isa. xxxii. 2. [6] Hos. vi. 4; xiii. 3.

they erelong fade and are blotted out as if they never had been; "as," says Isaiah, "the sins of Israel would be, if it repented!"[1] And now comes the full triumph of the sun, for the brightness, after these filmy obstructions have been swallowed up in the wide azure, seems so much the greater by the contrast.[2] But though rain falls very rarely in these shining months, it may fall in any of them, though its doing so is quite phenomenal, as was felt in Samuel's day, when rain fell in the time of wheat harvest.[3]

The Gospels incidentally illustrate the Palestine seasons. We think of the clearness of the skies, when we stand beside the shepherds as they watch the descending angels; of the splendour of the heavenly bodies, as we look up, with the Magi, to the Star over Bethlehem; of the surpassing clearness of the atmosphere, suggested by all the kingdoms of the world being supposed to be brought by it, within sight, in one view. The delicious air of much of the year rises in the thoughts, as we find Nathanael under his fig-tree, or the multitude sitting, in companies, on the grass, or the apostles sleeping in the open air, at Gethsemane, under the April full moon, though the chilliness of the deeper night, even so late in the year, is recalled by the fire in the courtyard of the high priest. But the warmth through the day, except on rare occasions, is brought home to us as we see Jesus sitting by the well, in November or December, that is, four months before harvest, wearied by his journey, even at noon, though He was in the very prime of life. The sultry heat of the shores of the Lake of Galilee explains, at once, the fever of the nobleman's son, and of others in the Gospels. The sudden storm on the lake is only what I myself have experienced;

[1] Isa. xliv. 22. [2] Job vii. 9. [3] 1 Sam. xii. 17.

a hurricane, rising without warning, fit to swamp almost any boat, but passing away almost as suddenly, after an hour or two. Elihu had, centuries earlier, watched "the spreadings and balancings" of the clouds,[1] and Christ brings before us the men of this day, as no less busied with the skies, at least so far as trying to foretell the weather. "When it is evening," they would say, "it will be fair weather to-morrow, for the sky is red;" and in the morning, "Foul weather to-day, for the sky is red and lowering." When they saw a cloud rise in the west, where the sea lay, they would say, "There's a shower coming;" and when it was a south wind, they would venture the safe prediction, that it would be hot after it.[2] We realize the overpowering heat of summer, as we read of the grain that had no depth of soil to retain necessary moisture being withered and burned up, or when we hear the tired labourers complaining, at evening, of the sore stress "the heat and burden of the day" had been.[3] Our Lord kept His eyes on everything, whether in nature or in the varied life around Him. His mother, in her lowly single-roomed cottage, had often played the housewife, by putting a patch on old clothes, or mending a rent in an old milk or oil skin, by closing the sewed-up hole with pitch; and from both, her Son draws homely but vivid use in speaking to the crowd.

The incidental notices of Christ's life, both in youth and manhood, help us to realize the humble lot He was contented to accept, "for us men and our salvation." The cottages of Nazareth are far worse than any but the very poorest we see in England, for though of good yellow

[1] Job xxxvi. 29; xxxvii. 16.
[2] Matt. xvi. 1-4; Luke xii. 54-57.
[3] Matt. xiii. 1; xx. 12.

limestone, they have very scanty accommodation, and hardly any of the conveniences of life, either in furniture or the ordinary requirements of the kitchen, according to our notions. The carpenter's workplace in which He toiled until He began His public career, would be either a rough arch, dug out in the soft hill beside or behind His home, or a small, arched, rough-walled workshop, with a few rude tools hung on wooden pegs driven in between the stones, and an earthen floor, with a piece of wood on the ground for bench. Beside this, the young Christ must have sat, day after day, cross-legged, hewing with His adze, or sawing, or smoothing whatever the simple wants of the peasants might need, for home or the field. To tinker a rickety shelf or ladder, or a broken-down hen-roost, or a loose hinge, or to fit up a rough cupboard, or put together a household chest for a newly married couple, or to make or mend a yoke, or put together the light details of a plough—so simple that Jesus could easily carry two home on his shoulders, or to put a handle in a mattock or a billhook, would, as I have said, be a fair sample of the occupation of each day. Nothing could be more primitive than the carpentry of Palestine, even now. Outside wooden stairs seem made to frighten all who use them. I remember one at the sheik's "castle," at Beit Jibrin, two stories high, from the courtyard, to the empty walls allotted me as my sleeping chamber; an awful construction, that appeared as if it only clung to the wall from pity, to save itself from remorse for throwing down the household, in hideous ruin, to the depths below. Another, at Bethlehem, down the steep slope which made the back of the house a story higher than the front of it, made me wonder what the poorest country carpenter in

England would think of such work. As to a shutter, in the few cases where there is such a luxury, to keep out the wind from the empty window-space, innocent of glass, the last thing dreamed, one would fancy, is that it should approach fitting.

Yet, in such primitive work must nearly all the life of Christ have passed. When He went out to the great world as the reformer of the age, it was from the ignominy of such a lowly calling; to be flouted as only "the carpenter," and that of a small, almost unknown, village. That such a man should presume to teach the world; a mere working peasant-mechanic, made the task Christ had set before Himself inconceivably hard, especially among a race like the Jews.

We are accustomed to think of our Lord, from His sinless life, as the ideal of physical as well as moral perfection. But the incidental hints in the Gospels do not encourage this pleasant fancy. On the contrary, it seems as if, in His case, as in that of natures of exceptional intensity, the sword was too keen for its scabbard; the body, worn down by the fiery earnestness of the spirit. Shut up in the silence of the hills; forced in on His own thoughts, even from childhood, by the simplicity of His surroundings; eager to commune with nature, but tied down to the poor details of village carpentry; with little more, in any way, than His own brain and heart, with which to face the deep problems of life and eternity that from the first absorbed Him, it appears only what might have been expected, that the matter-of-fact, commonplace world, around Him, should have seen in Him so great a nervous tension, such devotion to matters with which they had no sympathy, such an overworking of His whole nature, in

fact, as made them fancy Him beside Himself.[1] The dreadful mental struggles which culminated, in the beginning of His public life, in the forty days' temptation, and, at its close, in the bloody sweat of Gethsemane, speak of a body prematurely exhausted by the consuming fire within, and this seems, indeed, to have been His case, for the Jews, on one occasion, could only think of Him as "not yet fifty years old;" never dreaming, as they looked on His broken and worn-out frame, that He was little more than thirty.[2] He was wearied by His journey to the well of Samaria, though in the prime of life, and though His disciples, some of whom were a good deal older, went off to Shechem, a mile up the sweet valley, not at all tired. He fainted under the weight of the cross, though the others, crucified with Him, did not; and He died in a few hours, so that, when the soldiers came to kill the three before sunset, in compliment to the Jewish law which did not allow a body to be exposed on the eve of the Passover, they found the thieves still alive, but Jesus already dead. It is not to be forgotten, moreover, in recalling what has been said of the climate in this chapter, that our Lord was for years a wanderer, with the heat beating down on Him by day, and the cold trying Him through the darkness; often spending sleepless nights, and with little and only intermittent care taken of His health by woman's instinct and tenderness; with the wear and tear, mental and bodily, in addition to the burden of His soul from all other causes, of one who had no home. "The foxes," said He, "have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." He might sleep sometimes in the friendly house of Peter and

[1] Mark iii. 21. [2] John viii. 57.

Andrew, at Capernaum, but, as a rule, He must have taken what poor shelter offered in the miserable cabins of the fellahin, with the earth floor for His bed and their wretched food for His only provision. Yet even this was far before the nights when He was away in the lonely hills, either wrestling, in spiritual struggle, through the long darkness, or catching what snatches of sleep He could get, with the stony soil for a couch, or in some hollow in the rocks. The allusions in the Gospels, to nature, or to the human life of the times, are only momentary glimpses of the everyday experience of the Son of man.

CHAPTER XXVI.

CHRIST AND HIS AGE.

WHAT was there in Christ's character or words, it may be asked, that accounts for the fact that, at this day, two thousand years after His death, while empires founded by the sword have risen and passed away, though in their time embracing continents and seemingly eternal, the kingdom of Christ, rising silently as the light, has spread far and wide, from land to land, only by the force of truth and the warmth of love? What were the elements, so far as we can trace them, of Christ's comparative want of success during His life, and of His stupendous and still advancing triumph since His death? For Christianity has won the foremost nations of the world, first making them what they are, and is still going before them in their advance, and leading them on to ever new fields of intellectual and moral victory. The cross glitters above the dome of St. Paul's, the religious centre of the mightiest city of the world, and Christendom at large is the hope of the future for humanity.

The contemptuous reception our Lord met when He visited Nazareth from Capernaum, throws light on a state of public feeling towards Him, which must have been a great hindrance to His general success as a religious reformer. To His fellow-villagers it seemed presumptuous in one to assume the airs of a teacher, whom they had seen daily busy in Joseph's rude workshop, with the wood He

was sawing or shaping, held as He sat on the ground, by His bare right foot and left hand, while the right, between them, was plying the tool; making, as I have often said, now, some wall-pegs for a villager, or, another day, a baking-trough, or a roughly put together cradle, or an equally rude store-box, or a pole or upright for a simple plough, or a yoke for the small cattle that pulled it over the shallow furrows. They could not bring themselves to believe that one on whom they had looked as a mere untrained working-man, engrossed, all His life, with His lowly calling, had any right to set Himself up as an innovator on the time-honoured teachings of the regularly-ordained rabbis, whom they and their fathers had always held in superstitious veneration, as speaking with unchallengeable authority. His humble birth and antecedents would, indeed, have been forgotten if He had passed through the schools, for most of the rabbis were men of lowly extraction, and yet were honoured with a slavish adulation and obedience. But this was from their having sat, for years, at the feet of the "doctors" in the temple schools, and having been duly licensed by the "faculty," as teachers. At Nazareth, the want of this accrediting sanction shut all ears against Christ, but it would tell even more to His prejudice in Jerusalem and Judæa, just as, at Oxford or round it, the not having been at a university would close any access to the educated classes, on the part of a religious reformer from a remote Cumberland village, busy till yesterday as a working carpenter, and in the professional sense wholly uneducated. We may be quite sure that the school wits ridiculed Him much as Oxford men would a mechanic who ventured to pose as the rival and superior of university professors. But a still greater difficulty in His way would

be found in the fearless independence of His bearing. Unquestioning acceptance of the teaching of "The Church," among Romanists, is not more an instinct, than homage to the utterances of the rabbis was among the contemporaries of our Lord. To challenge them was as audacious as to dispute Moses himself.[1] To the horror of the religious world of the day, however, Christ thought for Himself, and spoke out what He thought; not limiting Himself, as the rabbis required, to opinions He could justify by the language of some rabbi of the past, but advancing everything on His own authority. It was as if an English judge, instead of implicitly following precedents in all his decisions, were to discard any reference to even the most weighty, and speak, it might be, in direct opposition to them. No judicial luminary dares or dreams of such a thing; his greatest audacity leading him no farther than to venture on some timid advance in a new deduction from earlier "Cases." The religionists of the day, as unaccustomed to independence of thought or language, as the mediæval Church in its palmiest days of ghostly domination, felt instinctively that in this phenomenon from the obscure Nazareth, they had a mortal enemy; and this once realized, to put Him out of the way was, of course, a religious duty, for were not they the divinely appointed teachers of the truth, to challenge which was to blaspheme God, its source? The story of Christ was, in fact, that of all reformers, of all ages. The prophets were stoned, or sawn asunder, or slain with the sword, or driven out from among men, to save their lives, if possible, in the depths of the mountains, or in dens and caves; destitute, afflicted, and tormented. Nor has it fared better for this world, with

[1] Geikie's *Life of Christ*, i. 74-76.

the reformers of any subsequent generation. They were put to death as long as barbarism allowed their being so, but, even now, how would it be with any one who should assail any section of the Christian Church, as Jesus assailed that of His nation? The privileged, either in Church or State, lose all self-control when they find abuses with which they are identified, vigorously attacked. If a true reformer cannot now be burnt, he can at least be ostracised, and persecuted in a cowardly way, till it would have been better for him to have been openly murdered. Fearless in His assertion of the essence of religion, at any cost to prevailing insincerity, Jesus, from the first, threw Himself directly across the path of the hollow formality of His times. His whole soul aflame with devotion to absolute truthfulness of word, thought, and act, He saw the mockery of no small part of what passed as religion, among the teachers of His nation. One of the most cherished among their articles of faith, was the superstitious sanctity of the rabbinical laws respecting the observance of the Sabbath. In my "Life of Christ" I have mentioned, at some length, what the extraordinary strictness of these "commandments of men" imposed on the Jew,[1] so that I do not need to repeat details. With absolute fearlessness of personal consequences, Christ refused to recognize any moral obligation in such mechanical piety, and acted as if no other laws existed, than those based on the love of God and our neighbour. At Capernaum, He shocked public opinion, at the very opening of His ministry, by healing a man in the synagogue, "possessed by a devil," though it was Sabbath.[2] At Jerusalem, under the very eyes of the college of rabbis, he

[1] Geikie's *Life of Christ*, ii. 95–97, etc.
[2] Mark i. 28.

healed an "impotent man" on the Sabbath.[1] When the disciples plucked ears of corn on the Sabbath, and rubbed out the grain in their palms, to eat it, He did not rebuke them.[2] On another Sabbath, He healed a man with a withered hand.[3] A second time, in Jerusalem, he healed, on the Sabbath, the man who had been born blind.[4] In a synagogue, in Peræa, that is, beyond Jordan, He healed on the Sabbath a woman bowed down with infirmity.[5] In the same region, he healed, in a Pharisee's house, on the Sabbath, a man ill of dropsy.[6] Still more, He defended His doing so, against rabbis of all classes, silencing them by His keen logic, and in no degree tempering His strong indignation at their mock religiousness, set forth as the true teaching of God.

The worth of prescribed acts of so-called religion, apart from any moral element in the performing them, was a fundamental principle of Judaism, as it is of all ritual systems, when they have survived long enough to let the spirit evaporate, and only the dead outward form remain. Hence, alms had come to be called "righteousness," though St. Paul's view, that we may give all our goods to feed the poor, and yet have none of the "love" which, alone, gives such beneficence moral value, commends itself to every unsophisticated conscience. "The righteousness of the law," in the sense current in Christ's day, was minute exactness in carrying out an infinity of "traditions of the elders," as the discharge, on man's side, of the conditions for acquiring a legal right to eternal life in the kingdom of the Messiah. In Christ's words, men counted that they were righteous and despised others, though they made clean

[1] John v. 8. [2] Matt. xii. 2. [3] Matt. xii. 13.
[4] John ix. 13. [5] Luke xiii. 10. [6] Luke xiv. 1–6.

only the outside of the cup and of the platter, and left the inside full of extortion and excess, or were only whited sepulchres, which might appear beautiful outside, but, within, were full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness.[1] That absolute sincerity is the one characteristic that gives any moral act worth in the sight of God, was the burden of Christ's teaching. In His Sermon on the Mount, and, doubtless, on many other occasions, He pitilessly exposed the mockery of sacred things, that passed for religion among the formalists of His time. Indifferent to their lofty popular airs of superiority, and to their vast power to crush an opponent, He roundly told the crowd, that "unless their righteousness exceeded that of the scribes and Pharisees, they would in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven;"[2] language only to be compared to that of a Mohammedan peasant, who should, to-day, preach in the grounds of the great Mosque, on the old Temple hill at Jerusalem, that all the dignitaries of that second shrine of the Moslem world were rank impostors. Nor was He content with generalities. He attacked, in detail, their teaching, on the gravest points. They were utterly wrong, He said, in their doctrine respecting murder and homicide, and He proceeded to revolutionize their laboriously settled decisions on these matters, assuming the air of a master before whose authority theirs was of no weight. Their proclaimed laws respecting improper sexual relations were assailed with equal sternness; their theology on these points, also, being denounced as utterly unsatisfactory. They prided themselves on their elaborate rules as to divorce, which at once gratified their importance, by extending their influence through the most secret fibres of

[1] Matt. xxiii. 25–27. [2] Matt. v. 20.

society, and by catering jesuitically, with a specious gloss of religiousness, to the basest weaknesses of men. But Christ thrust aside all their feculent casuistry with undisguised contempt, and in a single appeal to the Law itself, on which it claimed to be based, stamped on it forever the shame of being a travesty of the real teaching of Scripture.[1] They had spun whole webs of sophistry about the quality of oaths, refining their obligation into endless quirks and quibbles of circumstance and intention, on which, they contended, their validity was dependent, while doing nothing to restrain the odious commonness of their use on the most trivial occasions, which has, in all ages, been a prevailing vice among Orientals. Against this weighty section of their ethics, the honest uncorrupted nature of the Man of Nazareth rose with a sweeping condemnation, scattering all the airy cobwebs and subtleties with which they had obscured the right, and paralyzed the moral sense, and, raising, in their place, with a calm authority, grand in natural assumption of being His right, as the one condition of any asseveration, that it should be so absolutely sincere as to need no oath whatever to strengthen it.[2] But the whole body of Rabbinical divinity was, in turn, to be challenged. No idea was more settled in the schools, than the duty of exacting equivalents for any injury; the enforcing which, it was held, was only the imitation by man of the inflexible law of God. An eye or its money equivalent must be paid for an eye, and a tooth, or its money equivalent, must be paid for a tooth. "All wrong!" cried the great-hearted Preacher of the new morality. "The Kingdom of God demands of its subjects that they abjure this idea of retaliation, and repay evil with

[1] Matt. v. 31. [2] Matt. v. 33.

good; that they may win the wrong-doer into that kingdom, by the sweetness of unselfish love!" He evidently moved on a higher moral plane than the rabbis; they spoke as men; He, as the Voice of God![1]

The law had taught that men were to love their neighbour, giving that name to fellow Jews only, for no friendly relations with even virtuous heathen were permitted. But Rabbinism had made the matter still clearer, according to its conception of a neighbour, by adding, that we were to hate our enemies; a gloss which opened the door to any number of feuds between brother Jews; besides, in effect, making a virtue of hating all non-Jewish mankind. "False!" said the great Reformer. "Hatred is utterly prohibited to the sons of the Eternal Father! His name is love! He makes His sun rise on both the evil and the good, and sends the fertilizing rain on both the just and the unjust. Copy Him! Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be the true, and not merely nominal, sons of your Father who is in heaven."[2] Nor was His attack limited to the teachings of the rabbis; He assailed their practical morality, as earnestly. Too many of them, He told His audience, were only "hypocrites," that is, "actors," in the most sacred of religious duties; actors in their alms, giving charity "to be seen of men," not from love of its objects; going through the appearance of praying, to win reputation for piety; not favour with God. They laid great stress on fasting; but He tells them that they spoil all the virtue of their mortification, by making such miserable faces that their neighbours cannot help noticing them, and remarking how very self-denying they are.[3] The separation

[1] Matt. v. 38. [2] Matt. v. 43. [3] Matt. vi. 1-16.

of religion from morality, in the popular theology, had, at every turn, His most vehement opposition. Love had no part in the "righteousness" of the precisian of that day. To make all right for himself, was the one idea; to seek and to save the lost was not only a quixotic dream, seeing the "lost" were already predestined to exclusion from the kingdom of the Messiah, by divine decree, but it was sinful, inasmuch as it inevitably brought one into relations with them which compromised legal purity. Nothing could be more keen than His denunciation of such heartless inhumanity, by His tender words to the woman, who, in her broken penitence, had crept into the room where Christ was reclining at a meal, and having wet His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed them—proceeded to anoint them with costly ointment; for how, thought she, could such a lost and despised one do less than shew lowly gratitude to the one being who, in the stony world of self-righteousness around, had not repelled her in her sorrow, but had said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest!"[1] The odious spiritual pride of the day drew in its skirts, as it passed the "publican" or the "sinner," and as to entering their houses, or having anything to do with them, the very thought was treason to their theology, while to eat with them was as monstrous a suggestion as that a Brahmin should sit down with a Sudra, or a white, in America, with a coloured man. But Christ treated this insolent affectation of superiority with withering contempt, to the furious indignation of the tinsel righteousness thus condemned. "He eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners," was, from the first, a standing charge against

[1] Luke vii. 39.

Him.[1] But Christ knew the power of sympathy, and that, to wake self-respect, and with it the stimulus to a worthier future, it was necessary to shew respect, and treat men as able, if they chose, to rise to worthy manhood, and find favour with the Heavenly Father. Yet to recognize classes proscribed as entailing pollution on any one coming in contact with them, was openly to flout the teaching of "the Church," and throw down the barriers it had raised to protect the "righteousness" of the nation. "What kind of man can this be?" they would ask, "who keeps such company?" "Like draws to like."[2] "This a rabbi? Yes! Of the devil's school, perhaps: certainly not of God's, for is not the Law divine, and have not generations of rabbis laid down that Law with an exactness approved by God?" Christ cared nothing, however, for their ill-will. In His sight the most degraded of His brethren were children of Abraham, and if they were "sinners," they had the more need to be won back to a better life. He did not hesitate, therefore, to be a guest of one of the worst of these offenders; turning aside from the homes of the "righteous," to seek rest in that of the chief publican of Jericho, who, himself, admitted that he had been dishonest in his extortions.[3] He went, indeed, even farther, for, in defiance of all established rules, and of the most elementary propriety, according to the ideas of the day, He actually enrolled a publican in the inmost circle of His followers.[4]

Christ was thus at antipodes to the religionists of the age, at all points, for, having chosen it as the mission of His life, "that He should bear witness unto the truth," He was utterly fearless in doing so; thinking absolutely

[1] Mark ii. 16.
[2] Luke xv. 1, 2.
[3] Luke xviii. 5, 8.
[4] Matt. ix. 9.

nothing of His personal interests, or even of His life, in His magnificent fidelity to His Heavenly Father, Himself The Truth.[1] At Nazareth, He did not shrink from telling His former fellow-villagers, that their rejecting His message might lead to their own rejection by God, and hinted that if the nation refused to hear Him, the divine counsels might repeat what had been seen in the long past, when, though there were many widows in Israel, Elijah was sent to none of them, but only to the widow of heathen Zarephath, or as when, in the time of Elisha, though there were many lepers in Israel, the only one cleansed was Naaman the Syrian.[2] Moreover, not only did He denounce insincerity in fasting, as in any other religious act, but went so far as not to fast at all. Nor did He require His disciples to do so, though the disciples, not of the Pharisees alone, but even of the Baptist, zealously honoured this form of self-denial. The importance attached to it by the religious world of the day is seen in the Pharisee's prayer, which draws the attention of the Almighty, in the recital of the supplicant's claims on Him, to the fact that he performed not only the legal fast on the day of Atonement, but fasted voluntarily twice a week.[3] Christ had no interest in such mechanical aids to piety. Religion, with Him, was a matter of the life, not of physical suffering. "He came eating and drinking," like other men; to teach that "the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy."[4] Immense importance was ascribed to washing the hands at certain times of the day, and according to certain forms, not for cleanliness, but as a ceremonial rite. Indeed, a strict rabbi would rather suffer

[1] John xviii. 37.
[2] Luke iv. 28.
[3] Mark ii. 18; Luke xviii. 12.
[4] Rom. xiv. 16.

extreme thirst, than not use some of his last cup of water for an act held essential to "righteousness." But this form, also, Christ treated lightly, as we see in one instance in which He came into collision with the rabbis about it. "There were gathered together unto Him, at Capernaum, the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, who had come from Jerusalem, and had seen that some of His disciples ate their bread with defiled, that is, unwashen, hands. For the Pharisees and all the Jews, except they wash their hands diligently, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders [that is, of past generations of rabbis, whose precedents they thought themselves bound to follow with slavish exactness] : and when they come from the market-place, except they wash themselves [that is, take a bath], they eat not [for fear they may have touched some one less "righteous" than themselves, or something "unclean"] : and many other things there be, which they have received to hold; washings of cups, and pots, and brazen vessels. And the Pharisees and the scribes ask Him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with defiled hands?"

What must have been their indignation when, as answer, Christ roundly denounced them as hypocrites, and declared that it was of them Isaiah had written the dreadful words, "This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men!"[1] Imagine an Arab peasant hurling such words at the members of the Dervish college in Constantinople or Mecca, or an English workingman, in the old palmy days of the Romish Church, when ecclesiastical curses and the

[1] Mark vii. 1-7.

faggot were the ready answer to any criticism of the prevailing orthodoxy, assailing the bishops of the day, publicly, thus! There is no need to wonder at Calvary! To see hollow casuistry grimacing in the mask of truth, was enough, at any time, to rouse the indignation of a nature so transparently sincere as Christ's, and make Him break out in unrestrained reprobation. The rabbis, among other ways of giving an air of religiousness to acts the most worldly, and of twisting even the plainest commands of the Law they affected to reverence, into applications the most opposite, and heartlessly wicked, had invented a moral juggle by which a son might think himself free to withhold any help from his father or mother, although the Law expressly required the most loyal support and honour to be shewn them. All that was needed, was that the son should tell his parents that it would have been a great pleasure to have assisted them, but the money that might have done so was "given to God," and therefore could not be used for any worldly purpose, however good. The son might thus retain the cash, with the one condition that it should, ultimately, be paid over to the rabbis or the Church. "Out upon you!" said Christ, in effect, "by this evasion and chicanery, in spite of the plain words of the Law, you no longer suffer a child to do aught for his father or his mother; making void the word of God by your tradition, . . . and many such things ye do!"[1] Nor did He confine himself to vehement condemnation of their teachings. He challenged them to uphold them, and once and again tore in pieces the sophistries by which they were deduced from the Holy Books. They boasted that they spent their lives "searching the Scriptures," to make sure that they

[1] Mark vii. 11.

had omitted nothing required to establish a claim to eternal life in the kingdom of the Messiah,[1] but He discredited all this before the multitude, by proving that, in reality, they knew only the letter, and wholly misconceived the true meaning of the sacred text; touching them, thus, where they were most sensitive, in their professional self-esteem, and threatening their hold on the people. Nor was even this all. Once and again, we do not know how often, He launched against them, publicly, the most terrible charges that could be made against a body of religious teachers. We have indications of fierce disputes with them, for we read that after a meal in the house of a Pharisee, during which He had assailed the party as a whole, in the strongest language, "when He was come out, the scribes and the Pharisees began to press upon Him vehemently, and to provoke Him to speak of many things; laying wait for Him, to catch something out of His mouth."[2] He and they were open enemies, and He took no pains to conceal it. At His Pharisee host's table He had outraged one of the most sacred of rabbinical "traditions," by not "washing" before eating,[3] and had retorted, grimly, by telling His entertainer—whose hospitality, however, was in all probability only a snare to trap Him when off His guard, through the mock civility shewn Him—that He and his class, in laying stress on a rite like hand-washing, acted only in keeping with their whole blind system; ascribing merit to mere formal acts; "cleansing the outside of the cup and of the platter," while, at the same time, they were "full of extortion and wickedness," in their hearts. Once on this theme, in a gathering of rabbis, sharp answers would provoke fresh charges. Nor did Christ

[1] John v. 39. [2] Luke xi. 53. [3] Luke xi. 38.

shrink from the strife. "Woe unto you, Pharisees," cried He, perhaps still addressing His hypocritical host. "You give a tenth of the smallest herbs in your gardens to the Temple—so scrupulous are you in externals—and yet you treat lightly your obligation to give righteous decisions in the causes that come before you, as judges in the synagogue and other courts, and make as little of the need of love to God. Woe to you! pride, not humility, marks even your worship, for, in the synagogues, your chief concern is to get the seats of highest honour! That pride, too, marks you in public, for you delight in the reverend salutations paid you, as specially religious, and take care to find yourselves, often, in the market-place, where these salutations may be seen by large numbers! Woe unto you! You are like tombs that have not been whitewashed, so that men, without knowing, walk over them and are defiled, when thinking of no danger. The people, in taking you as teachers, are corrupted, when they fancy themselves safe. You are foul as dead men's graves, while men seeing only the outside give you credit for being examples!" A lawyer at the table, wincing under this terrible language, now ventured to say that the charges made, affected his class also. "They do," replied Jesus. "You lawyers, whose calling it is to interpret and teach the Law, you, who are the learned among the Pharisees, are as guilty as the lay Pharisees I have just condemned. You load men with burdens of legal precepts, which, you say, follow from the simple words of the Law, till they stagger under them, but you do nothing to mitigate them; leaving the crowd, as you tell them, to incur perdition, for not carrying out your inventions, which it is impossible, as you know, in their circumstances, to observe. Woe to *you*, also, at the

coming of the kingdom of the Messiah, for you are as bad as your fathers, who killed the prophets! You build tombs, indeed, to the dead prophets but before long, you will kill living ones! Woe unto you, lawyers! for when I declare the truth to the people, you, by your teaching, keep them from coming to Me; having, as it were, locked the door of knowledge, that is, closed the Scriptures, where knowledge of Me is to be found, against their understanding them, as one closes a gate with a key! You will not yourselves enter by opening your minds to the true meaning of the Divine Word, nor will you let those of the multitude enter, who are ready to do so—having perverted their minds against the testimony of Scripture by twisting its sense, that you may not be forced to admit that it proclaims Me to be the promised Messiah!"

All this was exasperating enough, but it had passed in a private house. Worse, however, was to follow. Excited as almost none but Orientals can be, the scribes and Pharisees who had been His fellow-guests, streamed out, as we have seen, after Him, when He left the house, and fiercely assailed Him, in the hope of finding some legal catch in His words, on which they might bring Him before the Church courts, and have Him silenced, if not scourged. His popularity was, at this time, at its highest; "many thousands" having gathered outside, and almost treading on each other to get near Him, to hear what He might say. Safe in their midst, from any violence on the part of the furious rabbis, instead of turning to some other topic, He began, at once, with a warning to the multitude, to "Beware of the teaching of the Pharisees: it is nothing but hypocrisy!"[1] Another time, when He was across the

[1] Luke xii. 1.

Jordan, we find Him turning as bravely against some Pharisees, who, loving money, like too many loud professors, before and since, scoffed at Him, for telling the people that they could not serve God and Mammon.[1] The parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, with its withering depreciation of the former, was spoken on the same journey, while Christ was making His way down the east bank of the Jordan, towards Jerusalem, where, as He knew, he was to die within a very few days.[2] Nothing could have been more galling to a class which "trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and set all others at nought," and as it was repeated over the country, it very probably was known at Jerusalem, in an exaggerated version, even before He reached the city. But it was during the last week of His life—when, knowing that He was doomed, He had come to the Passover, that He might die by the hands of the Church, at its centre ; leaving no loophole for the slippery ecclesiastical world to lay the blame of His death on any outside influence—that He threw away all restraint, and denounced the insincerity and pretence of the heads of religious society most strongly. On the Monday before His crucifixion, a number of the hard Old-Church party, the Sadducees, who adhered to the theology of the Pentateuch, and admitted no rabbinical additions, had roused themselves into sufficient interest in the new Galilean Teacher, to come to Him, as He was speaking to a crowd, in one of the arcades or "porches" that ran along the sides of the great Temple grounds, and try their hand at puzzling one who had been too clever for the traps of the other Church parties.[3] They fared no better, however, than their high-church rivals, and had to retire, like them,

[1] Luke xvi. 14. [2] Luke xviii. 1-14. [3] Matt. xxii. 23-33.

discomfited. Henceforth, prudence kept all equally silent, for it was fatal to their reputation with the people to be put to shame by the keen merciless logic of one whom they affected to despise as an illiterate peasant. Still, the infuriated Pharisees could not let Him have all His own way, and soon collected afresh round Him, if only to listen, and take mental notes of anything "unsound" they might hear. A skilful question put to them, however, forced them to leave Him, permanently, alone, to talk to the throng of "common people, who heard Him gladly." Glad to be free, at last, to speak to sympathizing ears, the bitterness of His experiences with the cold and hostile schoolmen broke out in words of warning against their insincerity and man-made theology. "Beware," cried He to the multitudes, "of the scribes"—the transcribers of the sacred books, and, hence, the authority in the interpretation of difficult passages, and in deciding cases rising out of the ceremonial law, many of them being members also of the High Court—"who desire to walk in long robes," reaching to the feet, "and to receive lowly salutations in the market-places, where crowds will see the honour thus paid them, and take the front raised seats in the chancel of the synagogue, in front of all the congregation, and the places of special distinction at feasts." After a little He returned to the attack. "Do as the scribes and Pharisees direct, for they are your legally constituted instructors in religious observances. But do not imitate their conduct, for they do not practise what they preach. For they heap up, and lay on your shoulders, heavy loads, harder to be carried than the huge loads of the street porters, which are a wonder to all—loads of precepts and demands, which they say the Law enjoins, but they will not give you the

least help, even with a finger, far less take them, for you, on their own shoulders. They delight in adding to them, not in lightening them. In all they do, instead of thinking of others, they think only of themselves and what men will say of them. When they pray, for instance, they wear broad straps to their Tephillin, or phylacteries, the little leather boxes you bind on your brow and left arm, in your devotions, with verses of the law in them,[1] and even these boxes are larger than those of other men—their aim being to make-believe that they are specially holy; and for the same contemptible object, they wear the tassels at the corners of the Tallith—the scarf over their shoulders—larger than usual, to make men think they are more engaged than other men, in thinking about the Law." Then came a repetition of charges already made, followed by the terrible climax, that "all their long prayers and sanctimoniousness were only a hollow sham and pretence, to get power over simple creatures who had money, such as widows, and cheat them out of their property."

And now, kindled in His inmost soul, at the hypocrisy of the day, as seen most prominently in its religious leaders, He poured out, in quick succession, a series of denunciations of class after class of these professional religionists, though He well knew that to brave them thus, meant to die at their hands. "Woe on you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, that is, 'actors,'" cried He. "Ye shut the kingdom of heaven against men! Ye neither enter yourselves, nor let others do so. You take infinite pains to make even one proselyte, and when you have got him, you make him twice more than yourselves a child of hell!" Then, from their teaching as to oaths, He scoffs at them

[1] Geikie's *Life of Christ.*

as "blind guides" and "fools," "straining out the gnat, and swallowing the camel;" scrupulous in worthless trifles, but worse than indifferent in the weighty matters of the moral law, judgment, mercy, and faith. "Woe, indeed, to you, you hypocrites! As I have said often, ye cleanse the outside of the cup and of the platter, but, within, you are full, from extortion and excess! Ye hypocrites! ye are like nothing so much as whitewashed tombs; fair outside; full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness, within. Men think you righteous, but you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity! Woe to you, ye hypocrites! Ye pretend to honour the old prophets more than other men do, building grand tombs to them, and the like. If you had lived in the days of these prophets, you would have joined your fathers in killing them! Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell? for when I shall send you prophets, and wise men, and scribes, you will kill and crucify some, scourge others in your synagogues, and persecute all from city to city."[1] Six months before, when He was at the feast of Tabernacles, He had told the scowling mob of these "serpents," who were then wrangling with Him in the same Temple grounds, that they were greatly in error if they regarded God as their father; their father was in hell, not in heaven, for they were children of the devil, and it was their natural course to do the lusts of their father.[2] From first to last He treated the rabbis, in all their variety of name, as "blind leaders" of the people; hypocritical where not ridiculous; pretentious, prejudiced, opposed to honest discussion, insincere, making a trade of their religiousness, hating any enthusiasm except their own; vain, proud, and the bitter enemies of any one

[1] Matt. xxiii. 1–36; Mark xii. 38–40; Luke xx. 45–47. [2] John viii. 44.

who might strive to breathe life into the dead form of religion, which was all they knew or would tolerate. The priests, as such, He never assailed ; the discharge of their simply mechanical duties involving nothing moral. But, as members of the two great parties of Sadducees and Pharisees, they had to bear the brunt, as much as the lay Pharisees, of His fierce denunciations. Yet the Sadducees, the old conservative section of the Jewish Church, which repudiated the rabbinical additions to the law, and clung to the theology of the Mosaic age, were not blasted by Him with such charges as He heaped on the scribes and Pharisees, but simply pointed out as misleading in their teaching.[1] Still, even the priests were sternly exposed, where the ideal morality of Christ saw them awanting. The chief priests, no less than the Pharisees, winced under the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen, "perceiving that He spake of them," and would fain have laid hold on Him for His audacity ; fear of the multitudes of Passover-pilgrims, by whom He was regarded as a prophet, alone restraining them.[2] On the day before, our Sunday, in the Passion week, he had, for the second time, infuriated the chief priests and scribes, by clearing out of the Temple grounds the rough crowd of money changers, cattle dealers, dove sellers, and venders of the various things required for sacrifices and offerings, though He had no authority from the Temple dignitaries to do so, and though the throng thus fiercely dispossessed had rented the spaces they occupied, from the ecclesiastical officials, on whom Christ's action thus cast the most stinging reproach. But His words were almost worse than His extraordinary deed, for He declared that those He had driven out, had turned

[1] Matt. vi. 11, etc. [2] Matt. xxi. 45, 46.

God's house, from a house of prayer into a den of robbers. What could be more galling than to have the ungodly desire of gain, on the part of the high officials of the Temple, which had made a Smithfield and a hucksters' quarter of the sacred enclosure, denounced, at their expense, so sternly ?[1]

[1] Matt. xxi. 12, 13.

CHAPTER XXVII.

CHRIST AND HIS AGE—(*continued*).

THUS, through His whole public life, our Lord committed Himself to a fearless assault on the religious leaders of the day. He had come into the world, as He told Pilate, that He should bear witness to THE TRUTH. In its heavenly realm He claimed to reign as Lord, and He found on every side insincerity and falsehood in those who claimed the monopoly of it amongst men. The prevailing maxim in the ecclesiastical sphere was, "to make the best of both worlds" —a doctrine absolutely fatal to that high enthusiasm for God and humanity, which were His leading impulses. The official religionists had, in fact, with infinite pains, contrived a Heaven-and-Hell-Amalgamation-Society, and gave it forth as the very Kingdom of God. He knew from the first that He was doomed. To denounce falsity is resented by none more than by self-styled religious teachers. Reformation seldom comes from the clergy. Dead, frozen conservatism of the traditional is, with most, an instinct. Indeed, religious opinions are, with the mass of men, inherited. To doubt, or think independently, is to risk perdition. Ghostly authority saps moral courage even in brave men. We are afraid that we are contending against God Himself. In corporate bodies the power of individual and original thought is paralyzed by the effects of multiplied influences, tending in one direction. The mind becomes preoccupied

by conclusions accepted without real examination, and intrenched behind the magic defence of tender associations, dating from a time when the mind, as yet unable to criticise, received passively whatever was taught it. That the opinions thus inherited found a common and fervid acceptance from the little world in which our life was moulded; that they had, moreover, the awful sanction of having been held as loyally by successive generations of men; that they had been zealously championed by those to whom we looked up, in our receptive years, as oracles; and, alas, that they should have been confirmed by our natural indisposition to disturb ourselves, by a moral cowardice that shuts its eyes to almost any light, by dread of the penalty that follows change in things theological—the persecution, the social ostracism, the loss of influence, and not seldom the endangering, if not destroying, our worldly prospects—intrenches even the most questionable views and modes of thought in an almost inexpugnable citadel. In Christ's day, to all this, there was added the hardening and deadness of the moral principles and heart, marking an age when religion had, largely, become a mere cover for worldliness, and when political ambition was fixed on making it the lever by which national supremacy, and the humiliation of all other races, might be attained. For the dream of a Jewish empire which should supersede that of Rome, with the spoil to the victors, was the prevailing conception of the kingdom of the Messiah, expected to be proclaimed, no one knew how soon. A reformer who should wean popular favour from the fanatics who cherished such projects, and should thus endanger their success, was an enemy to be hunted to the death as soon as possible. Identifying themselves with Jehovah, as the guardians of His honour and the favoured

depositaries of His revealed will, to kill any one who challenged their teaching, was to do God service.[1] They, in fact, assumed the position common to priesthoods in all ages. Rivalry was treason against the Church, and the Church was the patrimony of God, committed to them to defend. With the remembrance of the history of Christianity we cannot cast stones at them, for the rival sections of our own faith have been as bloodthirsty as those of other creeds. But Christ knew the past of His own race. The long roll-call of murdered prophets was a dark national reproach, for which His generation, with affected contrition, made believe they wished to atone, by building tombs to them, and by garnishing the resting-places of the other ancient worthies, whom their fathers had persecuted and slain.[2] He knew that His own herald, the Baptist, had been hounded to an early grave by them, for it was through them that Herod Antipas had been stirred up to take the bold step of apprehending him. From the first, He anticipated no other fate for Himself, and even predicted His crucifixion.[3] Indeed, we may reasonably imagine the conviction that His public career would be at once brief, and bitter with sorrows at every step, till it closed in shame, to have been the secret of His "temptation" in the wilderness; raising a long struggle of soul whether He should not, after all, abandon the mission to which He felt divinely impelled, of witnessing for "the truth"—since it offered only a life and death of martyrdom, and turn, instead, into the path open before Him, of leading His nation to a Jewish Millennium, in which He would reign as King of a world-wide empire. That He should, moreover, assuredly, be misunderstood

[1] John xvi. 2.
[2] Matt. xxiii. 29.
[3] John iii. 14; viii. 28; xii. 32.

and misrepresented; that, while the embodiment of infinite love, He should be held up as an impostor; that, in His self-sacrifice for man, He must live in the loneliest isolation, though His whole nature craved sympathy and friendship, and that while living a divine life of purity and goodness He should be numbered among transgressors, and die despised and rejected, was all realized by Him, and, in the end, calmly accepted, as the "cup given Him to drink." The agony of spiritual preparation once over, what could such a soul do, but challenge falsehood wherever He encountered it, be the result what it might? Nor could that result be doubtful.

That Christ should have been so early cut off, was, virtually, to involve what might well appear the failure of His mission. For, to die at a little over thirty, when He had been, at most, only about three years before the world, gave His work a very short time in which to strike root and spread. But the fact that He was so bitterly opposed by the leaders of His people, made it no less certain, that He should be equally unpopular with the nation at large. He might, indeed, be supported by the masses of the poor, but, as we have seen, these counted for very little in the Jewish commonwealth, and, in fact, were regarded as practically outside of it. The exclusives, who stood aloof from all the world as "the first-born of Jehovah," and looked down, however lowly their station, on the haughtiest lord or emperor, as immeasurably beneath them, followed blindly, with the gloomiest bigotry, the leading of the scribes and rabbis, and were bitterly hostile, from first to last, to the Teacher from despised Galilean Nazareth, as soon as they found He was not the mere echo of their immovable prejudices, and gross aspirations after a religio-political Jewish

world-empire. The supreme offence for which the whole national party, that of which the Pharisees were the representatives, finally sought His death, was that He would not conspire against Cæsar, and proclaim Himself a Messiah in their sense, though, in their inveterate hypocrisy, they had the hardihood to pretend that they clamoured for His crucifixion because He was not Cæsar's friend![1]

How keen and general was the opposition to our Lord, with passing and local intervals of favour, may be seen in almost every page of the Gospels. He returned from Judæa, after His first tour through it, quoting the proverb, that "a prophet has no honour in his own country;" Judæa being meant, as the district in which he had been born.[2] At Nazareth, His fellow-villagers tried to throw Him over one of the slopes so numerous round the houses. Every hard thing possible seemed to be said of Him, in one part or another. "He had a devil." "He was mad." "He was gluttonous, and a wine-bibber." "His miracles were done by a compact with Beelzebub." "He was a deceiver, leading the people astray." The educated classes could ask, whether any of "the rulers, or of the Pharisees, had believed on Him," or any, indeed, but some of the despised multitude, who, "knowing not the law, were cursed," and, therefore, most assuredly were not worth mentioning. Once and again, He had to make a hurried escape from attempts to kill Him. His friends did not believe on Him, but thought He was beside Himself; and even in Galilee, where He had been for a time immensely popular, His teaching so offended the mass of His disciples that they left Him altogether. Hence, before His death, He had no spot left in the country, where He was safe.

[1] Luke xxiii. 2. [2] John iv. 44; see v. 47.

Everywhere, He was in danger of apprehension, so that He had to betake Himself, now, to the borders of Phœnicia, and, at another time, to the districts beyond the Jordan, that He might preserve His freedom till the Passover, when He intended to give up the hopeless struggle, and go to Jerusalem, to meet the fate at once imminent and inevitable.[1] The only approximate parallel, so far as I know, to the Palestine of Christ's day, is the Ireland of our own; and we can imagine the ferocious hostility with which the purest, wisest, and most sincere reformer, starting from the ranks of the native peasantry, would be met, were he to assail the bishops, priests, and Maynooth professors, in addresses to the masses of his countrymen, and even in personal discussions and disputes. The Jews were as completely the slaves of their religious leaders, as savagely bigoted, and as ignorant, as the Irish common people of to-day; and we know what would happen, if the word issued from the clerical centres in each parish, to shew their loyalty to the Church against one who dared to speak to its discredit! His mission would, assuredly, be a short and troubled one, and if his early death was a mark of its failure, it would pre-eminently merit the name. Yet it might be very far indeed from a failure!

In the case of Christ, the apparent success of His enemies was, in reality, His abiding and ever expanding triumph. A truly heroic life is always, in the measure of its heroism, the highest gift man can leave to man. But what life approaches, for its grand realization of the heroic, the life of Christ? Alone, with no advantage of social position, either in His connections or fortune, He emerges from the obscurity of Nazareth, proclaiming the deepest

[1] Matt. ix. 19; Mark iii. 21; John iv. 44; v. 15; vi. 66; vii. 1, 5, 12, 20, 48; viii. 5.

spiritual truths, in the face of a hierarchy, ecclesiastical and lay, which, in all ages, had killed the prophets, and stoned those who had been sent to them, and in the face of a nation with whom the least breath against their religious usages, even in the most insignificant detail, was enough to raise a wild outburst of fury, which the death of the offender, with every circumstance of savage cruelty, alone could appease. Yet, could One who felt that "to this end He had been born, and to this end was He come into the world, that He should bear witness to the truth," shirk danger, however great, by judicious silence, when He saw that the system, paraded as religion, by hierarchy and people alike, was largely a hollow mockery, and that the kernel of reality in their theology had, long ago, shrivelled up and dried to dust, leaving only worthless husks, hateful to His Heavenly Father, and ruinous to the souls of men? Could He be basely silent when He saw, on every side, the weary and heavy laden multitudes; weary and heavy laden with the huge burden of these lies and counterfeits of spiritual food; left to wander hopelessly through life, like sheep that had no shepherd? With the multitudinous common people, thus treated as outcasts from the kingdom of God, here and hereafter, no man caring for their souls, and with the nation and its ghostly teachers regarding formality as in itself religion; with outward acts constituting, in their eyes, apart from their motive or morality, the righteousness which established a claim to eternal life, could He refrain from coming forward like one of the old prophets, and preaching the righteousness of the heart, as alone well pleasing to God? Filled with a divine enthusiasm for the honour of His Heavenly Father; His very meat, to use His own words, being to do His will, and to

accomplish His work,[1] His zeal in it, as it were, eating Him up;[2] how could He, for a moment, endure, without protest, the insincerity, perverted morality, and mere outside show, with inner foulness; the mask of virtue, in short, worn over all forms of unworthiness, which were yet thought to be religion, and to be pleasing to Him who accepts no worship but that which rises from a contrite spirit, and is sincere and true?[3] We must realize this consuming intensity of enthusiasm for righteousness, in the purest and widest sense, to understand Christ's unmeasured opposition, from the first, not only to gross sin, but to those who, with an air of respectability and an odour of sanctity, were, after all, to use His own expression, only whited sepulchres, fair to the eye, but full, within, of all uncleanness; ecclesiastics and foremost religionists, whose utter unworthiness and corruption are reflected in the terrible indictments hurled at them by Christ; smooth-faced, sanctimonious, and outwardly respectable, though they were. For we must not forget, that no one could be more exactly proper than the Pharisee in the parable, and he was, no doubt, a type of the average religious world of the day; a world which would not, I presume, have suffered by comparison with the aggregate of "good people" who represent religion among ourselves. The supreme sincerity shewn by such self-sacrificing fidelity to His conscience, has won for Christ an immortal glory, ever since He sealed it by the spectacle of Calvary. If early and violent death looked, at the moment, like failure, the ages since, reading His story more truly, have seen in it a moral sublimity unique in the history of mankind.

But this grand heroism of Christ was only the negative

[1] John iv. 34. [2] John ii. 17. [3] John iv. 23.

side of His relation to the hollow unrealities of the religion around Him. A still higher glory shews itself, in the "kingdom of God" He proclaimed in its place. For a local worship at Gerizim or Jerusalem, He taught that the heart was the one temple in which God condescended to dwell. "God is a Spirit," said He, "and they that worship Him, must worship in spirit and truth." They who do so, He adds, are the only "true worshippers," and "such doth the Father seek to be His worshippers."[1] The "kingdom of God is *within* you,"[2] was his mode of expressing the same thought, at another time. But, if so, the whole system of dependence on rites or priesthoods, or sacred shrines, was swept utterly away. The whole world became, in the grandest sense, the temple of God, and the broken and contrite heart His only holy of holies. The prophets had proclaimed the same high truth, in opposition to the priests and official religionists of their day. Heart religion, that is, sincerity, they declared, was alone pleasing to the Almighty; but they had never, like Jesus Christ, proclaimed the end of local temples, as the seat of God's special presence. Even the Baptist, the last of the order, clung to the Judaism of his day; requiring observance of the multiplied rites and forms of the rabbis, and only demanding, besides these, a sense of guilt before God and a resolution to lead a better life. But with Christ old things had passed away; all things had become new. In an age of the most minute ritualism, exact compliance with which was regarded as vital, He quietly put it aside, living as if He knew nothing of the washings, or painful Sabbath laws, or rules for avoiding contact with the "unclean multitude," or with "publicans and sinners;" disregarding

[1] John iv. 23, 24. [2] Luke xvii. 21.

even the rabbinical rules respecting the avoidance, by a religious teacher, of any recognition in public, of the other sex; a course so strange and doubtful, even in the eyes of His disciples, when they found Him conversing with her of Sychar, at the well, that "they marvelled He was speaking with a woman."[1] He does not condemn rites and ceremonies as, in themselves, wrong, but while leaving freedom in details, throws discredit on their importance, by instituting only a simple form of admission to His society by baptism, and an equally simple bond of union among His followers, supplied by their joining in a common participation in bread and wine, in remembrance of Him. For the first time in the Western world, He founded a religion without a priest, and without a sacrifice; for though the name "priest" is retained in the Christian Church, there is no instance of the corresponding word, meaning "a sacrificing priest," being applied either in the Gospels, or in the Epistles, to a Christian minister. In the society He established, He is the one "priest, for ever."[2] The material and the mechanical, the human and the sensuous, are eliminated from the organization of the new "kingdom of God," as far as is attainable. The soul is left face to face with its Father in heaven, with no intervening grossness of official intrusion, or tawdry assistance of forms or rites, except so far as they are indispensable to give a coherence and necessary medium of organization and mutual help. The synagogue, familiar to every Jew, was the home of the first Christian disciples, and continued to be the model of the first separate Christian assemblies. So faint, indeed, are the traces of ecclesiastical arrangements in the New Testament, that every sect, by

[1] John iv. 27. [2] Heb. vii. 17.

turns, has drawn from it conceptions of its own, as to the primitive form of Church government. Christ interested Himself very little with such matters. His care was to lay down principles, leaving their vehicle of dissemination or preservation to His followers. Men reverence Him now, and have reverenced Him, ever since He was among us, as the founder of that noblest of all conceptions, a purely spiritual religion, free from every element of corruption and decay, inherent systems encumbered with human officialism, or materialized by human equipments. For creating such a perfect ideal of the true relations between God and man, His sacred form was nailed to the cross, but "His Spirit liveth for evermore!" Year by year, the grand conception of worship given forth by Him, shines with a fuller glory, over which death shall have no dominion, as His name extends, in ever-broadening empire, from land to land, age after age.

It would, however, have been of little avail to have proclaimed that no religion but that of the heart deserved the name, had He left us without some quickening impulse, so powerful as to fill our whole nature with a divine enthusiasm, before which the dull inaction of our affections, and the counter-currents of our passions, should be lifted up, and turned, in a resistless advance, towards the realization of His conceptions. That divine impulse He supplied in rousing the soul to the imitation of God, whom He revealed in glimpses of an irresistible tenderness and love, as the Great Father of all that lives. The Jew had thought of Him as the Father of the sons of Jacob, but of them alone. In the second book of Esdras, which dates almost exactly from the days of our Lord, the Jew says, "O Lord, thou madest the world for our sakes. As for the other nations which

also come of Adam, Thou hast said that they are nothing, but be like unto spittle : and hast likened the abundance of them unto a drop that falleth from a vessel."[1] In noble contrast to this hateful bitterness and contempt of all races but the petty and fanatical handful of the Jewish people, Jesus proclaimed that the Fatherhood of God embraced all mankind, and that it did not think the humbler creatures of air, or earth, or sea, beneath His beneficent regard. He broke down, for ever, the haughty exclusiveness alike of the Jew and the Gentile, making nothing either of nationality, or culture, or rank, or wealth, as affecting the relations of any one with the Eternal; and announced that, in every nation, he that fears God and works righteousness is acceptable to Him.[2] That which had been, at best, the noble dream of a great-hearted genius like the Carthaginian slave Terence, in his famous line : "Homo sum : humani nihil a me alienum puto"—"I am a man : I regard nothing that belongs to man foreign to me"[3]—Christ embodied in a charter of universal brotherhood. From north to south, and from east to west, there was no distinction recognized in the new Society He founded, but moral worth. The love of God shed abroad in the heart, and shewing itself by leading to a love of all that lives, was the one condition of discipleship, and through this lies the secret of an ultimate universal triumph ; for heavenly love, filling the bosom of humanity, must, by a law of its nature, spread from land to land.

Nor did He leave His Vision of God to even the most impressive and varied embodiments, in matchless parables and discourses ; He illustrated it in His own life. No one could charge Him with sin. So absolutely divine, indeed,

[1] 2 Esdras vi. 55, 56. [2] Acts x. 34. [3] Terence lived B.C. 195–156.

were His whole relations to His Heavenly Father, that He, the humblest of men, could say, "I do always the things that are pleasing to Him."[1] "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to accomplish His work." "I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father who sent Me."[2] So intensely earnest was He, in everything connected with the fulfilment of His mission, that we read of His continuing in prayer, in the loneliness of the hills, all through the night before He chose His twelve apostles.[3] The rapt fervour of His soul, in His great work, from the first, may be traced in the frequently recurring glimpses we have of Him, absorbed in high communion with the Father above. When He allowed Himself to be consecrated to it by His baptism, we find Him praying so intensely, when thus finally sealed to His momentous task, that "He saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit, as a dove, descending upon Him: and heard a voice out of the heavens, saying, Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased."[4] The struggle of His soul, in definitely committing Himself to all the bitterness of the path on which He thus entered, is, as I have said, the key to His forty days' seclusion in the wilderness, with its long-drawn agony of temptation. At the beginning of His ministry, we find Him "rising up a great while before day, and going out, and departing to a desert place, and there praying."[5] When the multitude had shewn that they would take Him by force, to make Him "a king," in His love for man, and zeal for His Father, He fled from the temptation of selfish interest to turn aside from the path of self-sacrifice He had chosen, and hid Himself in the hollows of the

[1] John viii. 29. [2] John iv. 34; v. 30. [3] Luke vi. 12.
[4] Mark i. 10, 11; Luke ii. 21. [5] Mark i. 35.

hills till nearly dawn, in solitary prayer.[1] When forced to seek refuge beyond Jordan—Galilee, His last field, being finally closed against Him—it was while He was praying apart, in some upper dell of the lovely green hills round Cæsarea Philippi, that his whole appearance was transfigured. "As He prayed," we are told, "the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment became white and dazzling."[2] What a trance of spiritual absorption and elevation does this reveal! It was when His disciples saw Him praying, during His visit to Jerusalem, at the close of the year before His last passover, when He had only a few more months to live, that they asked Him to teach them a form of prayer, such as John had taught His followers; a request to which we owe the heavenly words of "Our Father."[3] It was when He was on His final journey to Jerusalem, while on the other side of the Jordan, that mothers brought their infants and young children to Him, for His blessing, that is, His prayers on their behalf; and that He granted them their wish so fully as to take the little ones in His arms, and putting His hands on them, give them His priceless benediction.[4] It was on the night of His betrayal, that He "lifted up His eyes to heaven," and breathed forth for His disciples, and for all who should in future ages believe on Him, that wondrous prayer which St. John records.[5] It was only a short time later, in the same night, that we see Him, in His agony in Gethsemane, praying so earnestly, that His sweat became, as it were, great drops of blood falling down upon the ground,[6] and the tortures of the cross did not keep Him from lifting up His eyes to the heavens. His life was thus rounded by

[1] Mark vi. 46, 48; John vi. 15. [2] Luke ix. 29. [3] Luke xi. 1.
[4] Mark x. 13–16. [5] John xvii. [6] Luke xxii. 44.

prayer; the surest indication of His whole nature being concentrated in the advancing those interests on earth, for which He could continually invoke the favour of the Eternal.

It might naturally be expected, that a life so spent in the contemplation of the all-perfect Father, and so devoted to the daily realization of His will, would be marked by a unique presentation to mankind, of an image, in daily human life, of those perfections, the adoration and reproduction of which so instinctively and fervently engrossed Him. The morality He taught was, as we have seen, ideal; leaving in the universal conscience, a sense of its divine perfection, which, in itself, stamped it as the very light of the Face of God. It condemned even the thought of sin, if cherished in the heart, but, if "strict to mark iniquity," and demanding that we should be "perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect,"[1] its awful loftiness was mitigated by an infinite love, through which it shone tempered, as the sunbeams by the atmosphere, which mellows their intolerable brightness into the light of morning. It is to be remembered that He was recognized by all round Him, however bitterly His enemies, as possessing the most unlimited supernatural powers, the slightest use of which on His own behalf would, at once, have overwhelmed His opponents, or demonstrated His supreme claims, or provided for His utmost wants. But it was also noticed, that He never, on any occasion whatever, employed these for a personal end. Such voluntary self-restraint, that He might exhibit a pattern of supreme meekness and humility, was, in itself, a triumph of a love more than mortal, but it had, also, another result. All fear of His using His awful powers on

[1] Matt. v. 48.

His own behalf, for either defence or display, was lost, and the spectacle of their constant and widely varied employment, for beneficent ends, on the suffering around Him, without regard to the social position of those appealing to Him—for the poorest were welcomed as kindly as the richest, and misery, in itself, was ever enough to call forth His sympathy, and receive the ministering services of His Almighty endowments—led to such reliance on His forbearance, and such confidence, that even His foes ventured to assail Him with insults and violence, and at last carried them to the length of seizing and putting Him to death. With all the immeasurable resources of omnipotence at His command, so gentle and loving were His bearing and words, so full of human sympathy and love, that the sons and daughters of sorrow, turning away from the scribes and rabbis, sought shelter at His side; for the poor people heard Him gladly, and it became a reproach against Him from His enemies, that He was a friend of publicans and sinners. His words fell as the dew, or the soft rain, on the mown grass, and washed off the stains of the world, as the spring shower brightens the dusty hedge; while the deeds of heavenly love which accompanied them, softened the parched soil of innumerable hearts, on which they lighted as good seed, to spring up to a harvest of life eternal. "He went about doing good," says one of His companions, looking back on His life, "and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him."[1] As to His words, Augustine finely tells us, "In Cicero, and in Plato, and such writers, I meet many things finely said; things that move the spirit; but in none of them all do I find these words: 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden,

[1] Acts x. 38.

and I will give you rest.'" To quote from myself, elsewhere, "The character of Christ, as it is seen in the Gospels and Epistles, is unique and incomparable. Innocent as a child, and moved by the loftiest thoughts, He shews the same spotlessness throughout, yet in no negative sense, like the mortifications of an ascetic, but in the midst of an active life, in which each day called out every varied emotion and impulse. He never hints at the need of repentance for Himself, though He makes it essential for all besides; but, in its place, He again and again claims a perfect faultlessness that sets him above such a requirement. The best of men are deepest in their humility, at the thought of their shortcomings; but Christ, though unequalled for patient lowliness and sustained religiousness, claims that His life, so far from shewing imperfections or sins, is a mirror reflecting the stainless image of God, as the unbroken pool gives back the shining round of the sun. "He that hath seen Me," says He, "hath seen the Father."[1] "He that beholdeth Me beholdeth Him that sent Me."

He thus declares Himself, in the words of the Epistle, "the image of God."[2] His claims and pretensions are greater, in every direction, than could, for a moment, be urged by one not linked to the Divine in a way no other man has been, without raising a feeling of horror at the blasphemous folly. Not only does He proclaim that he who has seen Him has seen the Father, but He requires that all men should render equal honour to both. He gives Himself forth as The Way, The Truth, and The Life; as The Light of the World; The Door of the Sheep; The Centre to which all men, one day, would be drawn. Even beyond this life, He claims power over the dead,

[1] John xiv. 9. [2] 2 Cor. iv. 4.

for they are to come forth from their graves at His summons, to be judged at His throne. Yet we never feel any incongruity in these unparalleled utterances; they never strike us as exaggerated, but harmonize with His whole being, as fitting and natural. He has a Divine patience that bears meekly every form of trouble, hunger, and thirst, a homeless life, the taunts of enemies and betrayals of friends, craft and violence, meanness and pride;—and moves amidst all, like the sun amidst the clouds, unaffected by them, shining out, still the same, through every rift, as they pass, far below."[1] By a life of such spiritual majesty, on the one hand, and of such absolute self-sacrifice on the other, to teach men, once for all, the meaning of love, infinite as the love of God, He revealed that ideal of the Eternal Father, in the imitation of which, we instinctively feel, lies the ultimate perfection of humanity. Such a life drew out, towards Him, the love of those with whom He associated as His daily companions, to an all-absorbing intensity which they themselves did not realize till He had left them. They saw the wondrous Man, with all power in heaven and on earth at His command, enduring a life of privation, embittered by all that could aggravate the human lot, yet bearing all with a Divine patience, spending His whole existence on others, and, as the Apostle expresses it, "though poor, making many rich;" they saw Him enduring the "contradiction of sinners" meekly, though He needed only to speak a word, and they would be driven off like chaff by the storm, before the answering wrath of the Almighty; and, finally, they saw those hands, which had never been raised except to bless, nailed to the Cross, and

[1] Geikie's *Entering on Life*, p. 150.

those eyes which had shed, even on His enemies, the sweetness of a celestial pity, darkened in death. But, soon, they had seen Him reappear, bearing the keys of death and Hades, having opened the way from both to all mankind, as the Resurrection and the Life; "the first-fruits of them that slept," so that, as by man came death, by man would come also His triumph over the grave. Then, after He had stayed on earth for a time, to prove His being the same Jesus as they had seen laid in the tomb, a new wonder met them, for, as He spoke His last words to them, they saw Him rise from earth to the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, whither He had told them, beforehand, He was going, to be their friend and elder brother, preparing a place for them, to which He would, one day, raise them, that He and they might be eternally together. He would, He said, come again, to take them with Him to the joys of His presence. Remembering all this, when He had thus departed, the burden of His teaching rose more and more tenderly in their minds—that they should go forth to all men, and invite them to share in the new Kingdom of God He had set up. "Constrained by the love" of such a Master, what less could they do than seek to win others, also, to love Him? Love was, thus, the one idea of Christianity; love of Christ, as the heavenly Dayspring of love eternal; the very image of God, who is Love itself. The imitation of Christ was the sum of His religion, for to imitate Him was to grow like the Great Father! Was a life, which cast such a thought into the leaven of humanity, a failure, as some would have us suppose? No! Christ's death, to use His own figure, was the grain of corn, from which, in its very dying, springs "much fruit." As the ages

pass, the influence of the love of Christ is conquering the selfishness of mankind. Even the statute-books of civilization attest His growing power. The regeneration of a world is a slow process, but the healing rays from His glorified Presence at the right hand of the Father—calling forth the verdure and fruitage of an ever wider imitation of His life—have in them the pledge of a future in which their influence will extend over all lands.

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